FAITH
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worship in all its essentials? Religion and worship are inextricably related. As A. N. Whitehead says: " the immediate reaction of human nature to the religious vision is worship. . . . The vision claims nothing but worship."

It is now our intention to make clear that not only humanists, as well as theists, worship, but that all men worship in some manner and degree, and that they do so whether or not they recognize it as worship or call it worship.

The basic meaning of worship is ' to ascribe worth to.' Therefore, that to which a man ascribes worth, he worships. And the greater the worth he ascribes to anything the more manifestly does he worship. It follows that what is called worship is not really worship unless the values which are present to our minds are actually the things which are most significantly real and valuable to us.

There is a close analogy between this view of worship and Fosdick's penetrating treatment of prayer as ' dominant desire.' (*The Meaning of Prayer*, Ch. 8) " Prayer is the settled craving of a man's heart, *good or bad*, his inward love and determining desire." Just as we actually pray by formulating and expressing strong desires without calling them prayers or addressing them to God, so, in the same sense, we admire, exalt, marvel and wonder at the great things in life without calling it, or even recognising it as worship. But it is worship none the less. And this admiration for and glorification of, things true, beautiful, lovely and of good report, is the basic and essential ingredient of worship when, at a more sophisticated level, we take part, on a Sunday morning, in an act of religious worship.

Worship is justified by the purifying, creative and unifying experience which it engenders and sustains in the worshipper, regardless of whether or not the name of God is used. In order to worship in spirit and in truth it is felt necessary by some to invoke the presence of God, whilst for others to worship in spirit and in truth, it is unnecessary to do so. It would seem that it is far more important that worship should be in spirit and in truth than that God should be invoked, for, to the discerning theist, if the heart and mind are exalted, God is already present. Of one thing I am sure: if theists would come to understand the roots of their own worship better, they would revitalise their own worship and would be moved to welcome the religious humanist as a sincere fellow-worshipper.

Speaking as both a philosophical and worshipping theist (and the two are not the same thing), I find myself in agreement with Professor Marti in describing the typical Unitarian faith in God as " hypothetical theism." I have always felt warm approval for Donald Hankey's dictum: " Religion is betting your life that there is a God." I feel that if I stake my life on what is for me the noblest hypothesis, I am in the good company of A. N. Whitehead: " the worship of God is not a rule of safety—it is an adventure of the spirit, a flight after the unattainable. The death of religion comes with the repression of the high hope of adventure." I feel that the humanist

shares his high hopes with me. His and mine are centred in man—not man as he is, though that is always the realistic starting point—but man as he is to be. The divine possibility is felt by both of us in the truth, beauty and freedom-loving nature of man and in the actual experience of joy in being, and of becoming whole.

The theist who would, albeit reluctantly, close the door of Unitarian worship to humanists, by insisting that worship is not worship unless it has God explicitly as its object, is being untrue to our inductive approach to religious experience by discouraging the humanist from pursuing his goal through an ever more complete identification of the self with the Supreme Reality. That theist is also nearer, perhaps, than he realizes to a denial of the God whom he professes to worship. Dr. Fritz Marti has happened to comment on this point: " The humanists are in danger of worshipping themselves or, what is worse, society. The danger of theism is godlessness, because God vanishes if turned into an object," even if that object be the Supreme Object of worship. If we bring the God of theological speculation into worship as its object, we have put up an idol and we are all the more idolatrous because we are proposing to worship the artifact of our human intelligence. Paul Tillich, in his *Systematic Theology* pointed out that it is *religiously* necessary to stress the atheistic consequences of theism. Worship *of* God is really a very misleading description of theistic worship. The true worshipper does not worship God as an object, he worships *in* God, he in God and God in him. Even we Unitarian theists are often prone to forget that in worship it is the Spirit that matters and not our theological habits and predilections! If we are led to an apprehension of the Holy in our worship, it is sufficient. We should make our worship more and not less meaningful if we were sparing in our use of the word God until such time as men feel that it can be used meaningfully again for the sublimest apprehensions of what is True, Beautiful, Loving and Holy in the experience of the worshipper and the underlying nature and purpose of life in the cosmos. If God is real in human experience you won't be able to keep him out of worship: if he is not real, you dare not invoke even his name in worship.

We have, I hope, made clear the general direction in which we seek for religious unity in and through our worship. What remains as possible within the space available is to indicate in brief the structure and content of worship which springs naturally from our empirical approach. Let it be noted that, in pressing our demand that our worship must be " in spirit and in truth," we have shifted our attention from the theological to the psychological implications of worship. *How* we worship—not *What* we worship—is what matters.

It is to Carl Jung that I am indebted for the initial insights into the anatomy of the human psyche and how men variously apprehend reality. It will not, probably be the last word, but it should carry us far on the road. I confine myself to a series of propositions,

the fuller implications of which, for worship, will be developed later.

Men worship what is most valuable to them in their own experience and, as there are different biases in different men, their experiences differ and their apprehensions of what is valuable and worshipful differ.

Jung has discerned that there are actually four main ways or modes in which men experience reality: through sense experience (neural), through reason (mental), through feeling (emotional), and through intuition (spiritual).

There are four main categories of value which belong appropriately to each of these four ways of feeling after reality: the enjoyment of Beauty through sense experience, the perception of Truth through reason, the experience of Love through feeling, and the apprehension of Holiness through intuition.

If every man is initially disposed to feel life more meaningful and valuable in terms of one of these values than the rest, he will be relatively weak in his response to the other values and, through lack of use, his faculties and apperceptions will lie dormant and relatively undeveloped in those directions.

The goal of religion, as it is of life, is the integrated wholeness of the individual personality and the life more abundant for all men. This requires that, in order to mature, each man shall develop all four sides of his nature through coming to appreciate the values which others find in life and which to him have hitherto been as a closed book.

The purpose of worship is, then, to provide the conditions whereby each man may enter through the portal which is his own natural mode of approach to reality, find there the things which are most meaningfully real to him, and go on to learn, first by toleration of others and then by the activity of his own sympathetic imagination how to evaluate, enjoy and worship with his whole being.

Jesus seems to have belonged pre-eminently to those for whom the feelings of the heart are foremost. Because he experienced God by feeling after Him, his apprehension of God was in terms of personal relationship and his characteristic symbol for the Great Reality was that of an all-loving Father.

But there are those who do not at first respond to this typically Christian way to God: they have never yet felt that their whole lives were made more meaningful and joyful in terms of selfless love: other ways into the fuller life seemed more natural to them.

The Unitarian witness is characteristically other than that of the heart's response to the Divine Love: it is more of the head, and of the mind's apprehension of Divine Truth. The devotion to God as Truth has naturally yielded a less personal experience than that of those whose hearts are moved first. Reason is more objective than feeling: it is dispassionate rather than passionate. One may love the truth and identify oneself with it, but the truth does not yield the same experience of a personal relationship as does loving-

kindness. It is, moreover, significant that Unitarians describe their religion rather as an attitude and a poised way of life than as a moving evangel or commitment to action.

But Unitarians have no need to be apologetic about finding God as Truth. Devotion to Truth, when it passes outside its own proper sphere of intellectual integrity, becomes an insistent demand for sincerity in assessing what is pure and good in emotional feeling, for sincerity in interpreting the mystical intuitions of the Holy, and for sincerity in the creation and appreciation of the Beautiful. This passion for sincerity which springs from a love of Truth is a great religious virtue which we shall continue to practice.

We have propounded in the briefest space possible the outlines of a doctrine of worship which accepts the Great Tradition of religious worship, abides by the empirical approach which is the genius of our own tradition and wrests to our purpose the tested findings of modern psychology as to the structure, function and motivation of the human psyche. Once it were shared understandingly and worked out in our services, differences between theist and humanist would be seen as enrichments of insights and each would learn of the other what he had hitherto missed of the Vision Splendid.

There is still more to be said, but not now. And we still want comments and results of tested experience.

Humanism and Theism—a further view

T. WARDLE*

THE "conversation" between Humanism and the rest now taking place in the Unitarian Movement is indicative (on a small scale), of a deeper and more urgent religious tension at the heart of all mankind. It is the contemporary expression of the eternal God-Man dialectic.

Humanism comes, whether in Russia or America, as the inevitable antithesis to an inadequate and decadent thesis about God, a God so removed from creative living experience, a God so prostituted, so exploited for selfish and mischievous ends as to become the veritable enemy of Man. A radical and shattering break with the God that could sanctify the Stock Exchange and bless the Atomic Bomb was unavoidable; it was and is the expected response to the betrayal of value by a declining civilisation whose monument is a first formula for the suicide of the world.

Seen in perspective then, Humanism in all its forms is an essential pre-requisite to a purified faith for those who still suffer in the thrall of a demonic God ("it is necessary to empty the churches before we can fill them again.")

* Personal note on p. 20.

But what about those who, ostensibly, do not so suffer; the inheritors of the free religious spirit? What is their task? I suggest that it is to work here and now for a new synthesis, a new view of God born of the reality of experience, not of shallow theorising or the monotonies of habit. In this, the Humanists, by turning their backs upon the gods of liturgies, Biblical criticism, expediency and wishful-thinking, have cleared the ground. It remains now to engage seriously upon the business of re-conceiving God and the religious life.

Professor E. S. Brightman says of Humanism that it is thoroughly in harmony with the spirit of empirical religion; " it shares the religious interest in values, and finds values concretely in personal and social experience; and it is devoted to the active creation of that progress which some monotheists submissively leave to the will of God. Humanism is right in its insistence that religion must find its evidence in the facts of human experience. Nevertheless, there are some who question whether the facts of human experience can be understood or the highest human values achieved without the adjustment of human experience to an objective reality beyond it which is the source of its experience of values. Humanism wants to be certain in its foundations and modest in its claims; but perhaps if it is certain it cannot be modest, and if it is modest it will have to give up the quest for certainty in the interests of the quest for higher value."

The traditional religion of the world today does not " find its evidence in the facts of human experience," it finds it in " revelation," doctrine and a short of nostalgic authority of the past. The pity is that our movement suffers from this along with the rest.

But Humanism, no less than the error which produced it, is a reflection of our time, of the " Age of Anxiety " which demands the sheet-anchor of certainty. It wants to fix itself in the known and so it creates the value, Man. In its degenerate form this becomes Soviet Man or U.S. Man or even Me-Man. In its exalted form it becomes an extra-personal value which yet finds meaning and expression only through the personal.

In this latter form it approaches Reconceptionism, that view which holds the urgent necessity of a re-evaluation of God, based on the *total experience* of the human personality, and the communication of such a knowledge of God by empirical means. Such a concept disciplines the tension between the Transcendent and the Immanent by recognising them as the two poles of a continuous experience, Divine-Humanity.

In this there is nothing original, it is the central testimony of the mystics of the race. Not, I submit, the " experience of a ' Thou ' answering to a questing ' I '," but an experience of oneness between the Thou and the I: " that art thou," " I and the Father are one." The Humanist's sense of the continuity of himself with " the sweep of matter from remotest time and farthest space " is not far distant

from the intuition of Plotinus, " each being contains in itself the whole intelligible world." For the Reconceptionist it is not so much the verbal interpretation of the experience of God which is important, as the experience itself. The impact of Logical Positivism (itself an empirical emphasis) has made clear the vanity of language.

Yet it is not enough to speak of experience. For many this immediately suggests " religious " experience as a separate activity of consciousness distinct from all other experience, and raises problems of wilful delusion and psychological abnormality. Much mysticism is of this order, and, besides being suspect, has nothing to say to the world of activity and the wider realm of experience.

Experience as a *method* for the unitive knowledge of God, therefore, must on this new view, be total, all-inclusive. The testimony of all aspects of consciousness must be included and religious data must range from the experience of fortuitous evil to the sublimities. It is repeatedly demonstrated that where the individual, schooled in conscious sensitivity, is exposed to the maximum of experience on all fronts, the personality develops a mechanism capable of reducing the most unlikely and incongruent facts to significance. When this awareness is present, and a readiness to experiment, every new experience contributes to the building up of a sentiment, a " life-view " which can justly be termed religious.

The mechanism of the religious personality enables it not merely to absorb and utilise experience, but also to discriminate, to progress in awareness, to ascend the ladder of values till it becomes, unconsciously, subject to the operation of Value daily within itself. This is the life that dwells in God.

The outstanding obstacle to the practice of such a theory of religion in our time is the character of modern society which tends towards the obliteration of the personality and, in certain major areas, to the limitation of experience. Any reconception of the religious quest therefore must necessarily embrace a social philosophy which aims at a society organised for the experience of God. Such an undertaking is vast, but there are signs that it is being entered upon.

How this new religious impulse will come, it is not possible to say. But history does not make itself, it is made by God-Man. It would be thrilling to think that our movement could be an instrument for the re-birth of God in the soul of Man. But there is much to be done, we still reflect too directly the spiritual inertia of the day. Yet because we have not lost the treasure of our freedom, we are capable of making the new response.

Nowhere has the plea for reconception been put more lucidly than in the Christmas broadcast by Canon Raven: " we need not, we must not, pick and choose: the whole (of experience) is open to us and it is our business to be sensitive to our uttermost capacity, to be alive fully and eternally. We are explorers in quest of the horizon, explorers who should be everywhere at home. . . . we must enlarge and purify our concept of God."

*Humanism—A Reply to Critics**

LEONARD MASON

I DO not know who first suggested that the fragment " man is the measure of all things " might be taken as an initial text of Humanism. But F. C. S. Schiller in 1908 focussed attention afresh on it and claimed that it had not been properly expounded by Plato. Modern expositions have rescued the teachings of the Sophists from much of the satire and vilification of Plato's judgment, and Protagoras at least can no longer be ranked among the shallowest of Greek thinkers. The ' spell of Plato ' is being unwound. Grote, Th. Gomperz and Schiller were forerunners in this task, and current work from Jaeger, Nestle, Kathleen Freedman, Untersteiner and Popper has brought the teaching of Protagoras into sharper focus than ever before. We are no longer dependent solely on the extant fragments for an evaluation of his work.

In epistemology Protagoras taught that, as matter is in a state of flux, the objects of human perception are continually changing. The person perceiving them also changes, and judges the world according to his perceptive situation at a particular moment. All appearances are therefore private to him and different from those of other people; but each appearance is true because it is given by the physical relationship between observer and object. One man's sensation is therefore just as true as another's.

Protagoras was accordingly accused of providing no criterion for determining what truth might be amid so many differing opinions. But " man the measure of all things " is now shown to be a statement of that very criterion. We have to understand by " measure," a mastery, and for " all things," all individual perceptions. Each man must master his own experiences firstly, by improving the condition of his mind so that his perceptions become better, and secondly, by taking into account the cumulative experience of other men whose perceptions fill out and round off his own. The individual relies on his own sensation for acquaintance with reality, but masters the raw material of that sensation by reference to the consensus of enlightened opinion. " Man the measure " is interpreted in a collective as well as in a singular sense.

In the field of political theory even Plato gives the discussed fragment more than the individualistic interpretation. He reports Protagoras as claiming that though each citizen is free to hold his own opinions he is obliged in his conduct not to transgress the consensus of opinion expressed by the laws of a city-state. Karl Popper in his *Open Society* has enlarged on this. Societies are ordered

* Criticisms of Mr. Mason's original article on " Humanism," Spring Issue 1956 (No. 26), were published in the Summer Issue (No. 27).

by man-made laws usually codified by particular Lawgivers but emerging from the assent of the citizens and kept by communal obedience. Protagoras, unlike Plato, made man responsible for political institutions, and not Nature or the gods. Nature consists of facts and of regularities; responsible decisions enter the world of nature only with us. Man both individually and collectively is the measure, the criterion and the instrument by which intelligent and responsible progress is possible.

When I asserted that it could be argued from the words of Protagoras that there was nothing higher than man, I was relying on another of his preserved fragments: " Concerning the gods, I am not in a position to experience their existence or otherwise, nor the nature of their manifestation; for the difficulties are many which prevent this experience and human life is short." Such avowed agnosticism, while not indeed going so far as to deny the existence of the gods, leaves them out of reckoning in the consideration of morality, political theory and human destiny. Protagoras preferred to speak of the one conscious being who could be experienced—Man, instead of the gods whose existence was beyond verification. He did not however discard mythology, but used it to throw light on his central doctrine of man. His use of myth is instructive. Attic poetry and tragedy had already explored the instinctive force of mythology, but had left the content of the myths relatively unaltered. Protagoras, using the mythological form, deliberately adapted it for the expression and illumination of rational thought. It was no longer for him, nor for Herodotus before him, nor Plato after, an irrefutable source of revelation.

We therefore learn a good deal of the thought of Protagoras from the myth attributed to him by Plato. The focus is on man, not on the gods. Originally man was created in the bosom of the earth and compounded of earth and fire; to this naked creature Prometheus gave knowledge of crafts, but since men lived scattered, their crafts availed them little against the attacks of wild beasts. They were forced to gather into cities for mutual protection. Lacking political wisdom their situation was no better until Hermes was sent from Zeus to convey to mankind *aidos*—the respectful acknowledgment of any superiority in others, and *dike*—the sense of justice and order. In the natural gifts received from Mother Earth and in the technical skills distributed by Prometheus there were differences of endowment, but the distribution of political knowledge by Hermes was uniform. All men are equal before the law and all are responsible for their actions, but the able and well-trained are of more use than the others and deserve honour and promotion accordingly. Plato emphasised the latter and looked to a self-perpetuating oligarchy; Protagoras was a firm believer in complete democracy, though we have no evidence that his theories were put into practice except that Pericles valued his counsel and invited him to become Lawgiver in the new city of Thurii.

I have dealt at some length with Protagoras because he is one of the first examples of a man, empiricist in philosophy, democratic in political theory and agnostic in religion. Whether or not he was typical of his own day, he at any rate fits the description of many people in ours. Such an attitude of mind needs encouragement at a time when it is assailed by dogmatisms of religion and science, subject to tyrannies of political power and economic dominion, and in general faces the insinuating attack that any person who cannot give allegiance to absolute standards of morality, truth and religion is necessarily feckless and cynical and can hardly be expected to contribute either a firm foundation of belief or the poise of comfort to a bewildered generation. Humanism can supply that encouragement.

Admittedly Humanism is urbane, pragmatical, tentative, and will not satisfy those who pose crucial questions about the universe and expect ultimate and final answers. What is the prime origin and the ultimate purpose of all created things? What is the basic stuff out of which being and natural processes emerge? What is minimum and maximum reality, the infinitesimal and the infinite, the all-embracing and unconditioned ground from which human perception and the world of known appearances arise? These were questions which Protagoras left aside because he could be in no position to answer them; nor are we in any better position. They are questions admitting no verifiable solutions. Instead, the humanist prefers to initiate inquiries in the realm of his own experiences. He posits a reality which is inferred from sense-data and which yields an indefinite number of perspectives for different individuals. No single one of these perspectives offers the observer a ringside seat at the arena of reality. To come as close as possible to that reality all perspectives must be considered and tedious collation made of the findings. Certain conclusions of method follow. Each perspective is as valuable as the next. There are always gaps, unoccupied perspectives, and the knowledge acquired when any gap is filled needs to be integrated into the growing corpus of opinion rather than excommunicated because it is strange and upsetting. At the theoretical limit of this philosophical description all perspectives have been occupied and something like the total awareness of mankind brought to bear in turn on specific areas of knowledge. It may seem an impossible programme to come anywhere near this limit, but that is what is meant by man's being the measure of all things; man increasingly approximates to the limits of a descriptive series.

It is possible to imagine that some men can see reality as though their personality were extended beyond their own specific location in space and time. In themselves they gather a multitude of perspectives by drawing upon some collective consciousness. That is what I was feeling after when I used the phrase Man the Collective. I suspected that it would be misprized because it has a sinister political connotation in our day. It was also taken to be some

false surrogate for deity. Let us look at it more closely and in non-philosophical terms.

In historical research, for example, to get as near as possible to a past period the spade of the archaeologist, the test-tube of the soil chemist, the microscope of the botanist, the geiger-counter of the carbon-14 tester, the geologist, numismatologist, anatomist, decoder of manuscripts and inscriptions, and sundry other specialists work together in the hope of reconstructing as much of the total past situation as possible. The separate pieces of converging evidence are not easy to evaluate in isolation, but their meaning becomes clearer as the total pattern slowly emerges. A collective enterprise is required not only for gaining knowledge of the whole, but also for learning the significance of the parts. Then the director of the research collates all the evidence and fits it into as comprehensive a description as possible. Another, as Toynbee has well written of his visits to Greece, reconstructs the whole past occasion by drawing imaginatively on his well-stocked information, and the scene comes alive for him, sometimes with overpowering verisimilitude.

The humanist feels that reality can be known in a similar way. Individual experiences past and present are gathered together forming a climate of opinion, and some men reared in that climate become seers, prophets and sages of the whole human situation. Their synthesis represents available reality. When man himself is the object of search, two sources are available to us. One is the encyclopaedic account of human history from palaeolithic times, from fragments of which we can infer the pathetic heroism of a species whose origins are elemental but whose achievements are complex and refined, and whose ideals outsoar natural endowment. The other is the discontinuous story of great exemplars who embody in themselves the sympathies, sufferings and triumphs of the human race.

Of that human race we can be acquainted with little beyond the small circumference of our own lives, but stretching from us, behind and before, above and below, is "Manself (Steinbeck in *Grapes of Wrath*) with hunger in the stomach multiplied a million times, hunger in a single soul for joy and some security multiplied a million times, muscles and mind aching to grow, to work, to create a million times; muscles aching to work and mind aching to create beyond the single need. . . . Manself who grows beyond his work, walks up the stairs of his concepts and emerges ahead of his accomplishments.". Manself, Man the Collective; how can we help but use capital letters, coin new phrases, fashion new myths to convey the object of reverence when it emerges out of the imagination of our hearts? Myth is a poetical, literary vehicle by no means reserved for mystical theism, and if faith in Manself ennobles any individual by calling forth his deepest resource and his finest loyalty I see no reason why it should be summarily damned as a second-rate mysticism!

The Present Crisis in Culture

FRANK A. BULLOCK

IT is with considerable hesitation that I venture on this wide and complex subject. I cannot claim any special qualification beyond that of a general reader with a deep interest in creative writing in poetry, fiction and interpretive[1] criticism. Yet it may be that this generalised interest makes one sensitive that the writers of our time, in almost all fields of cultural interest, draw urgent attention to their awareness of an inner resistance and confusion created by a world which appears more and more indifferent to the things of the imagination and the spirit they seek to communicate.

That indifference appears to create grave doubts in their minds as to the validity of their own inner vision. And while the awareness of conflict between an indifferent world and creative vision has a long history behind it, it seems to have come to an acute sense of crisis since the end of the 18th century. Then it was vehemently expressed by Blake, later by Shelley, Coleridge and Matthew Arnold, and in this century by Yeats and most of the modern poets who have succeeded him.

We may seem to concentrate our attention upon poets and poetry exclusively, but poetry is the highest expression of consciousness in literature. Of the crisis outside literature I am incompetent to speak. In the 18th century, however, there arose a new medium of communication in the form of the novel. In the minds of the great novelists there was no doubt as to the validity and acceptance of their presentation of life vision, until we come to D. H. Lawrence who often complains bitterly and even tiresomely that he speaks to a world wherein the primal energies of the imagination are either dead or corrupted.

Again, in a recent article on historical writing, Geoffrey Barraclough complains that so many, who survey the progress of historical study in the past fifty years, end on a note of misgiving and disenchantment. Many other recent articles disclose in the modern historian the feeling of something like dismay at the inadequacy of the human mind to assimilate and give intelligent form to the vast mass of data continually presented by historical research on every period. Put into a sentence, one aspect of the present crisis in culture may be expressed as distrust of the human mind to give intelligent coherence and meaning to human experience. Again, in certain books which have appeared in recent years, the evidence of this sense of crisis in culture is very pronounced. We need only mention a few. *The Poetic Image* by Cecil Day Lewis, 1946. *The Letters of W. B. Yeats*, edited by Allan Wade, 1954. *The Making*

[1] The adjective " interpretive " has established its usage in literary criticism, replacing " interpretative."—Ed.

of a Poem, by Stephen Spender, 1955. *D. H. Lawrence, the Novelist* by Dr. Leavis and *The Intelligent Heart, the story of D. H. Lawrence* by Harry Moore, 1955.

The purpose of this enumeration is to give some idea of the data and evidence from which we may draw certain tentative conclusions. Herein is disclosed a situation which involves every one of us and demands understanding and an attitude of decision.

In many ways this crisis in culture has been intensified by vast political and social changes which have accompanied or even precipitated the situation as it has emerged in the modern consciousness. These changes can only be mentioned in passing, for they are the inescapable elements of fate over which apparently we have little or no control: the emergence of a mass civilisation demanding ever greater technical and social organisation; the development of mechanical devices to meet the needs of ever expanding production; the deep divisions of our modern world into two vast armed camps equipped with weapons of total destruction, each defending an ideology which at present seems utterly unreconcilable. All this and much else creates an atmospheric pressure in which the free individual and cultural and spiritual values seem almost incapable of survival. Such, we may feel, are the outward circumstances which in part create and condition the crisis. To many minds these circumstances seem so absolute in their power and influence that any discussion of a cultural or spiritual crisis appears utterly futile, as the expression of nostalgic longings for something for ever dead and done with. It is just because of the temptation tamely to accept this defeatist conclusion that it is worth while to consider the attitude of those writers of our own century who declined to accept defeat, and who, in the face of ever increasing odds, fought to defend the deepest impulses of the creative spirit in their own souls and to keep alive the flame and fountain of a deeper culture for the future.

Put in my own terms, this crisis seems to involve the momentous choice between daring to have faith and confidence in our own minds, or the abandonment of any such confidence, by the acceptance of a materialistic philosophy in which the intuitions expressed in creative and imaginative writing in poetry and fiction are regarded as idle dreams, conditioned only by social and material factors. Should that view finally prevail in our age, the creative impulses in literature and art will suffer severe frustration and the life of the mind will suffer an intolerable impoverishment.

Having expressed the view of the present crisis in culture in my own simple terms it may be worth while to examine how the crisis is apprehended by some of the writers mentioned earlier.

Our first witness is W. B. Yeats (1865-1939). He lived through the breakdown at the end of the 19th century of the idea of the purely aesthetic, the affirmation of "art for art's sake," of the collapse of the Beardsley period in the tragedy of decadence, and the trial and imprisonment of Oscar Wilde. Yeats was deeply

influenced by the spirit and events of that period but had the spiritual vitality and toughness of mind to grow out and beyond it. For a time he was deeply engaged by the purely romantic vision, but again became dissatisfied, for he felt that it cut him off from the general current of ideas. It was the danger of this isolation from current life and thought which troubled him most, not because he wanted to surrender to it, but because he felt such isolation destroyed the means of communication he desired to establish between the great cultural tradition of the past and the minds of men and women of today. I will quote a few of his most pregnant utterances. " I am certain that there are many men and women who are not moved by the light shining in the solitary tower because it has not entered into men's prayers nor lighted any through the sacred dark of religious contemplation." Hence, all his life he was seeking for a poetical myth that would express the whole mystery of human life and experience—seeking for an image that would make him dizzy with the sudden conviction that " our little memories are but a part of some greater memory that renews the world and men's thoughts age after age, and that our thoughts are not, as we suppose, the deep, but a little foam upon the deep."

I am not concerned to suggest that Yeats ever solved his problems by the discovery of such an all-inclusive image that " could renew the world and men's thoughts age after age." Such a discovery may well appear impossible of achievement. I am only concerned to show that he was deeply conscious of the breakdown of imaginative response in our age and that the development of a technical and mechanical order of society did make the approach to the realm of imagination difficult and almost impossible for the men and women of our time. The divorce from the great cultural continuity of a living tradition seemed to him to mean the impoverishment of the resources of a rich and satisfying life for the individual, and so in the end for society. Perhaps he expressed his own secret passionate longing in these words. Speaking of Ireland he says: " We have held to our ancient Church where there is an altar and no pulpit and turned away from the too great vigour of those who, living for mental improvement, have a pulpit but no altar." Yet he himself could find no place in that ancient Church, hence he said that " deprived of the simple-minded religion of my childhood I have made a new religion. Almost an infallible church of poetic tradition. Because the imaginary figures of the poetic tradition are created out of the deepest instincts of man to be his measure and norm. Whatever I can imagine these mouths speaking may be the nearest I can go to truth." The sense of breakdown in imagination and culture was accompanied by a deep sense of social and spiritual disaster. The experience of the Irish Rebellion and its aftermath only confirmed and emphasised this apprehension. Speaking of the optimism of his early days he says: " Oh what fine thoughts we had because we thought that the worst rogues and rascals had died out."

" Now days are dragon-ridden, the nightmare
rides upon sleep. A drunken soldiery
can leave the mother murdered at her door
to crawl in her own blood, and go scot free.
The night can sweat with terror as before.
We pierced thoughts into philosophy
And planned to bring the world under a rule.
Who are but weasels fighting in a hole."

" Things fall apart, the centre cannot hold,
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
are full of passionate intensity."

Yet in the end he felt that in the poetic vision some real gain had emerged. " All is changed, changed utterly. A terrible beauty is born."

And in one of his letters, on January 4th, 1939—he died on January 28th—he wrote: " I know for certain that my time will not be long. I have put away everything that can be put away that I may speak what I have to speak, and I find expression is a part of study. I am happy and, I think, full of an energy I had despaired of. It seems to me that I have found what I wanted. When I try to put it all in a phrase I say ' Man can embody truth but he cannot know it.' I must embody it in the completion of my life. The abstract is not life and everywhere draws out its contradictions. You can refute Hegel but not the saint or the Song of Sixpence."

Yeats has no special consolations to offer, yet he affirms that the solitary soul, the enduring individual, is not hopelessly involved in the chaos. Yeats is gone, but it is clear that his influence remains as a challenge to the modern age by the great number of books written since his death about him, his poetry and his view of life. Whatever we may think of his ultimate conceptions, we must honour him in that, through good and evil report, neglect and adulation, he never surrendered the integrity of his own faith and mind. " He kept the vision in a time of trouble."

Perhaps the voice crying most loudly and violently in the same period was that of D. H. Lawrence (1885-1930). It has been fashionable in recent years to discount Lawrence and his writing, to regard him as a little too rough and uncouth in his self-assumed prophet's mantle, and his protests against a mechanical and materialistic civilisation as too angry and violent. It is stange that T. S. Eliot who wrote so eloquently of the Waste Land in that period, should have been so hostile to one who portrayed that waste land so vividly in his greatest novels—*Sons and Lovers*, *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*—as also in his tales and poetry. Eliot, perhaps more than anyone else, set the fashion of dismissing Lawrence as a little too crude for the intelligentsia and the sophisticated. Yet the root of the matter was in Lawrence, and today his place is assured in the realm of serious literature. All the hysteria that followed his death

among his self-appointed disciples has now passed into silence. I am only concerned to pay tribute to one who dared to stand by the realities of the instinctive life of the body and soul, and who fought violently against the shams and unrealities of his war-stricken period. Agreed that the language was often extravagant, but the passion behind it was sincere. Here is a quotation from an unfinished review of a volume of essays by Eric Gill, written only a few days before Lawrence died.

" It all depends what you make of the word God. To most of us today it is a fetish word, dead, yet useful for invocation. It is a question of God, Almighty God. We have to square ourselves with the very words and give them back—Almighty God—the old vital meaning. Strength and glory and honour and might and beauty and wisdom, these are the continual attributes of Almighty God in the far past. And the same today. The God who enters into us and imbues us with his strength and glory and might and honour and beauty and wisdom—this is a God we are eager to worship."

Let us grant that this is not the God of any formal theology but the quick and living God, the awareness of whom was born in the immediacy of artistic creative experience. Expressed in more personal terms in a poem from *The Last Poems of D. H. Lawrence*, " The Hands of God ":

" It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God,
But it is a much more fearful thing to fall out of them.
Did Lucifer fall through knowledge?
Oh then pity him, pity him that plunge!
Save me O God from falling into the ungodly knowledge
Of myself as I am without God.
Let me never know, O God,
Let me never know what I am or should be
When I have fallen out of your hands, the hands of the living God.
Save me from that. O God!
Let me never know myself apart from the living God!"

There are no theological implications in these passages. They are chosen because they present in vivid and dramatic form the antithesis of the two levels of consciousness which Lawrence felt was present in his world and epoch. It is clear that he had deep awareness of both the creative and the disintegrative impulses. He embodied in his own experience the darkness and the light of our period, but stands clear at the end on the side of life and the light which is the shadow of the Eternal. This dual awareness runs through all his writing, expressed in more bold and dramatic terms than any other modern writer.

We turn now to two living writers. Cecil Day Lewis and Stephen Spender. Day Lewis has written two books which bear directly upon our subject. *A Hope for Poetry*, 1934 and *The Poetic Image*, 1946.

A Hope for Poetry presented a kind of apologia for modern

poetry. It was concerned with the growing severance between the great tradition of poetry and the modern world which threatens to frustrate and defeat the poet and the life of the imagination. I will only use one passage which focuses the main intention of the book: "Poetry was born from magic, it grew up with religion, it lived through the age of reason. Is it to die in the century of propaganda? Not death perhaps, but a self-defensive cataleptic trance. For what hope has it of making itself heard in such a pandemonium of slogans, national anthems, manifestos, monkey business, headlines, tips from the horse's mouth, straight talks, loud speakers, madhouse gossip and high explosive ideals. Poetry is based on the principle of free individual interpretation. You must create the meaning of each poem out of your private experience. But life for the average child of the 20th century becomes an endless series of extension lectures on everything under the sun, every item of its experience is explained to him, and worse, he is told exactly what his reaction should be. Who is he, then, to claim an individual interpretation of anything, let alone poetry? Bread that once contained a Deity is an affair of calories now. You could put your own interpretation on the deity but you cannot make calories mean anything but calories. They can neither receive life from your private experience, nor add life to it. Man is a spirit, but is too late. We know better. Man is an Anatomy."

In 1947 Day Lewis published his Clarke Lectures of 1946 under the title of *The Poetic Image*. These lectures are in part a discussion of the techniques of the poet's craft, but in three lectures: (1) *The Living Image* (2) *Broken Images* (3) *The Eternal Spirit's Eternal Pastime*, he deals with the more general aspects of the present crisis in culture. He complains that the ancient myths are dead or at least buried, that all images postulate a spiritual order beneath the material order in a world where no general assent is given to such a spiritual essence and order. Hence there is a stronger passive resistance to poetic images. People no longer feel the poetic image as a pleasurable method of exploring reality and do not believe in that kind of truth which can only be revealed through the image. So there is resistance to the poetic image due to the poverty of the general imagination. He finds the clue to our age in the chasm between reason and instinct. Yet he does not end in despair but makes a moving appeal to the poets of the future: "the poets yet unborn who are divided from us by a scientific discovery which must change the face of the world or else destroy it. We poets of today speak to you across a desert our own generation has made—and called it 'Peace.' Nevertheless, we are closer to you than brothers, for poets are able to make the desert blossom, they are the luckiest of mortals since frustration, sorrow and even despair are stimulating and obedient to their creative hands. It is still your task to show men fear in a handful of dust and eternity in a grain of sand. As you set about the task in a world not likely to be less bewildering and complex than was ours, for you as for us, the seasons will come and

go, the wind will be moving over the wheatfields, the land fretting out its heart against the sea, and at evening the lights will spring up, one by one in the towns where mankind bivouacs. The human lights that, like your poems, are gestures of permanence amid the passing, signs of love in the valley of the shadow. Being poets you will not need telling that concentration is everything, a brooding concentration, the prayer of the intellect—which, whether it is directed upon migration of peoples or upon a hedgehog crossing a lawn, finds therein at last an image to interpret and to outlive the mortal fact." That is a moving and noble confession of faith in the renewal and continuing power of creative imagination among the generations of the future.

But it is high time that I called my last witness in this case of the present crisis in culture. Stephen Spender published in 1955 a volume of critical essays under the title *The Making of a Poem*. I only need draw attention to the first essay "Inside the Cage—Reflections on Conditioned and Unconditioned Imagination." The main argument runs as follows: The old idea of poetry as something purely creative, "conditionless as God or life itself," which is the shaping force at the centre of this individual imagination, has disappeared. Instead, the centre of the modern consciousness is utilitarian. The consequences of the surrender of the unconditioned poetic imagination is that the imagination has no autonomy, is completely conditioned by circumstances. The poet is inside the cage and unless the questions and answers on which the present attitude is based are re-opened, poetry will not find its way out of the cage. The unconditioned centre is where the imagination has power to influence people, to transform the outward form of things. The poetic imagination which can communicate with an invisible world remains at the centre. The centre is conditioned when imagination is banished into an individual solitude, shut off from any knowledge of reality outside man's own nature, and from power over the way in which men shape their lives. He goes on to point out that Yeats, Lawrence and Eliot made affirmation of very strange beliefs and several of the poets make an urgent insistence on the necessity of belief. Quite apart from those poets who affirm dogmatic beliefs which they certainly intended as statements of a factual kind, there are those like Blake, Wordsworth and Yeats who expressed in their poetry mystical experiences which they believed to be true, and to which they bore witness, so that Cyril Connolly in a review on Yeats's collected letters says: "Most people do not believe anything very much and our greatest poetry is given us by those who do. The well-meaning, moderate, reasonable, sceptical cultured humanist is the audience, the fanatic is the conjuror. Critics who do not believe must comment on creators who do." The problem for Spender is to put the creative imagination back at the centre of life. "Acceptance of the division of the world into the truth of science and the pseudo statements of the imagination is to lock

poetry inside the cage—we live today in a world with two futures—of total annihilation, or of revolution different from any envisaged by politics. It is impossible to think of survival only in terms of material progress. In regard to the future, we are now like Pascal taking his bet on eternity. We can take our bet on survival of the physical world only through living and working creatively."

Here ends the evidence expressed in the reflections of the creative writers I have had time and opportunity to examine. It may be objected that the emphasis has been laid so heavily on poetry and imaginative writing, but then the crisis as I conceive it lies just in this tension between imagination and utilitarianism. Or to put it in another way, the present crisis in culture is a crisis of consciousness, and poetry and imaginative writing generally still reflect and express the most vital consciousness of this and every age.

As a living human being I want assurance as to the validity of my mental and emotional life. That the deepest apprehension of reality does not deny the significance of my imaginative experience; that my apprehension of beauty is not an illusion, and that my awareness of a rational relationship to life and reality is not so precarious that it is at the mercy of any manipulation of abstract theories. In a word, that I am not the slave of a material order or of an interpretation of reality which denies the deepest instinct of my spirit for some complete fulfilment of my whole humanity. That culture really means the affirmation, explication and expression of an order of reality in which my humanity can awaken, breathe and live creatively. Nor can I think that I am alone in this, but that many men and women share these hungers and thirsts of the spirit, and even those who do not consciously share this awareness are capable of being awakened and of coming into a desire for this richer and fuller life. Thus at bottom the crisis in culture is a major crisis in which the spiritual life of men and women are deeply involved. Indeed, some of our poets and prophets have even suggested that it involves the life or death of our Humanity. We can only hope that mercifully such words express an exaggerated anxiety. It is certainly good that the individual should feel the sense of extreme danger, that the poets and prophets should cry aloud to us that we are spiritually decadent, or dying or dead. Thus they create in us and in the generations the awareness of a tension which makes us struggle to lay hold on the life eternal. Our consciousness so quickly becomes torpid, dull and unresponsive, that in the very midst of the plenitude of life we fall into deadly sleep. We make only automatic responses to the surface shows of life and are caught again and again in the mood and fashion of the passing moment. Yet the ultimate mystery of the soul is that it is always set towards its destiny of rebirth and resurrection. The very awareness of death in us affirms the presence of that which is undying and immortal. Only across the chasms of apparent death can we apprehend the reality of the continuity of ever renewing birth and life.

Again and again in the passing generations our humanity has had to feel that it was shut up unto death that it might desire passionately the undying life, and struggle to make that fundamental reality its deepest and most precious possession.

So vast is the intensity, range and power of the eternal life manifested in time and creation that only for an instant can we sustain our hold in the flash and flame of that high consciousness, and even as we cry it is present, does it seem to fade and demand of us new effort for its deepening and widening apprehension.

Certain it is that we can never in our mortality continue in one stay in relation to that infinite mystery. Even the mighty attainments of this high consciousness in the past, recorded in the great literature, art or music of any age, demand of succeeding generations new awakening and effort to respond to the beauty and significance enshrined therein. Yet they remain sealed fountains of fire and light, always ready to respond to the touch of our sympathy and understanding. And so, I cannot, in conclusion honestly assent to the cry of the poets and the prophets in their threats of doom. That they have become aware of the deadness and the seeming peril, that they have cried mightily that the Holy City of the imaginative life is in danger, makes it very clear that, in their vision, the reality of that sublime life is already vibrant and astir. For them the vision was not, and is not, finally clouded or lost, but there, somewhere upon " the flaming ramparts of the world " stands the abiding sign of the rainbow of promise, that while the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and summer and winter, and cold and heat, and day and night shall not cease to speak their ineffable word of beauty and meaning to the wondering souls of men.

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Ambiguity of Roles in the Liberal Ministry

JOHN RUSKIN CLARK*

THE work of the ministry in liberal churches is impaired by ambiguity in the conception of its roles. The traditional ways of ministering do not produce the desired results, either in the lives of individuals or in society. This contributes to a sense of frustration among ministers, to the relatively low social and economic status of the ministry, and to minimizing the effectiveness of religious leadership in the society.

Though other factors contribute to the peripheral position of the ministry in society, such as the inadequate integrative principle of liberal religious organizations, the unstructured position of the minister in a democratic church, and the lack of a dynamic theory of legitimation to replace the rejected doctrines of apostolic succession or a supernaturally inspired holy scripture, this paper focuses on the inadequacy of the minister's conception of his function and roles, and the disparity between his conceptions and those of laymen.

Leadership in a society is conditioned by the effectiveness of the ministry's leadership within its own religious organization. Historic models of leadership, as described by Max Weber, are not adequate for the liberal ministry. Charismatic leadership operates most effectively outside institutional forms and in crisis situations while the liberal ministry serves institutions in a relatively stable society, and traditional or bureaucratic leadership cannot be dynamic in a democratically organized church with a rationalized faith, such as obtains in the Unitarian and Universalist denominations. The implications of the concept of " profession," so significant in structuring dynamic leadership in other fields, have not been systematically spelled out for the ministry. The ministry should exhibit professional skills, both with respect to the mastery of its field of knowledge of religion, and with respect to the adequacy of its ability to relate that knowledge through its roles to people's daily concerns.

The thesis of this study is that the liberal ministry's concept of its function has not been formulated in dynamic terms, and that there is disparity between the conceptions of ministers and laymen, which minimizes the effectiveness of liberal religious leadership.

This slender study is based upon a qualitative analysis of data obtained from 27 interviews, but it is supported by findings from a preliminary questionnaire filled out by 34 respondents (and then rejected as inadequate for the purposes of this study), and by published and unpublished articles by ministers. The questionnaire was rewritten as an interview schedule and used to interview twenty Unitarian and Universalist ministers. This does not represent a

*Personal note on opposite page.

" sample " of ministerial opinion, but every effort was made to make it representative by choosing respondents from each of the five schools that specifically train Unitarian and Universalist ministers, as well as from three other schools; by choosing men with wide ranges of experience, from over forty years since ordination to less than two years; by securing a geographical distribution; and by interviewing ministers who were currently serving parishes from the smallest to the largest in size.

For purposes of comparison, four ministers of other denominations represented locally were interviewed: A Reform Rabbi, and Episcopal, Congregational and evangelical Baptist ministers. Also, for further comparisons, three men of other professions were interviewed with relevant portions of the schedule: an architect, a doctor, and a school teacher, making 27 interviews in all. In addition to the self-definitions of ministers as to their function and roles, the ministers' opinions were sought as to what they thought was the opinion of their laymen about the same function and roles.

Unless a man has a clear conception of what he is trying to do, he can hardly be effective in doing it. The ministry seems to be unclear about its function, as was revealed by diverse definitions.

Some of the ministers thought the ministry had a particular responsibility for promulgating an objective body of knowledge about the meanings and values of life, while others thought its primary concern was to integrate the individual in terms of his own inner needs and drives. The first tries to provide a conceptual framework within which life is to be lived; the second tries to help people to fulfill themselves by unifying their interests. The first emphasizes helping people to know what they want, requiring a knowledge of cosmology or theology, while the second emphasizes helping people to get what they want, requiring a knowledge of psychology. The two points of view need not be mutually exclusive, though there was indication of the failure to integrate the two in the minds of the ministers.

Among the ministers of other denominations, the Congregational minister and the Rabbi defined the function of the ministry in terms of communicating meaning and value. The Episcopal minister was more specific in referring the meaning of life to traditional Christian concepts. The Baptist minister was concrete in identifying his function with " leading men to accept Christ." Further exploration of this point would, I believe, show a positive correlation between the dynamics or effectiveness of religious leadership and the specificity of the minister's self-conception of his function, quite apart from any objective evaluation of the validity of his claims.

The members of the other three professions were more readily explicit than the ministers in defining their function.

If there is ambiguity in the minds of ministers as to their function, the ministers feel that their function is more indeterminate in the minds of laymen. Though some ministers thought laymen

looked to them for constructive help consistent with the minister's conception of his function, others felt that few laymen had any other expectation of them than to conduct the traditional rites, to be a good executive, and to build a stronger church. Some ministers felt that in the opinion of laymen, their work was irrelevant, a "traditional and stultified pattern," "good for everybody else but themselves." These findings about lay opinions may reflect more the ministers' opinions of the laity than the lay opinion of the minister's roles. A fruitful extension of this study would be to interview laymen with relevant portions of the same schedule to learn actual lay opinions in order to verify what is indicated in this study, that there is disparity between lay and clerical definitions of the same roles. If substantiated, this disparity would be significant in understanding the status of the ministry.

The ambiguity in the minister's conception of his function is reflected in his conception of his roles, and the disparity between the ministerial and lay conceptions is continued in the roles. The relatively insignificant lay evaluation of the minister's function may be the consequence of the evident failure of the ministers clearly and consistently to understand and effectively to perform their roles, though this varies with the role.

In this study, six traditionally recognized roles of the ministry were explored: preaching, public worship, baptism, marriage, funerals, and pastoral calls.

In the two more standard performances, preaching and public worship, there was greater uniformity among the definitions of ministers, and greater correspondence between the ministers' self-conceptions and lay conceptions. In the other roles, there was greater divergence, both among ministers, and between ministers and laymen. It is significant that laymen attach less significance to those roles about which the ministers are less consistently explicit. Although collectively the ministers described significant and meaningful roles, individually they gave varying interpretations. This seems to indicate that the potential roles are not irrelevant, but that their inadequacy is due to failure to define and implement them.

Ideally, the ministry performs significant roles in the service of an important function. Practically, it does not seem to work out that way. The ministers do not feel that laymen recognize the importance of what they are doing. Only in preaching do the laymen generally expect the minister to do what he is trying to do, with the worship service second in the lay sharing of the minister's understanding of its meaning and importance. But for marriage, baptism, funerals, and pastoral calls, the prime value sought by laymen seems to be compliance with an unexamined tradition.

Lay indifference to baptism is, for instance, an indication of the small importance of this role to laymen. Three of the ministers volunteered that only "about half" the children of their parishes were baptized. When the ministers were asked why in their opinion

laymen wanted to have this rite performed, all but two gave such perfunctory reasons as "out of custom," "it's traditional," "a pleasing convention," or "a residue of the old sacramental idea." Of the four ministers of other denominations, three included the same opinions. The ministers do not seem to feel that laymen find this role meaningful, which indicates a breakdown in the function of giving meaning to life through this activity.

The other roles, except preaching and public worship, followed about the same pattern. When the minister's roles become perfunctory, it is not surprising that the minister finds little satisfaction in it, either from the sense of personal achievement, or from the financial and moral support he receives. Certainly part of the responsibility for this situation lies with the minister's failure consistently to explicate the significance of his roles in vital terms. When the function of religion is conceived in orthodox terms, the routine performance of traditional priestly roles may be adequate for those who hold an orthodox faith, but when the faith of the congregation has been transformed, the modes of implementing that faith through the roles of the ministry must also be explicitly transformed. When the ministry acquiesces in performing vestigial roles, it can hope for no more than a residual status.

Because of the limited scope of this study, conclusions must be tentative and suggestive. These interviews revealed the ambiguity in the minister's conception of his function and roles, and the disparity between lay conceptions and the conceptions of the ministers. My hypothesis that the ministry fails consistently to understand and implement its function and roles, and that laymen consequently presume the minister's service is perfunctory, seems to be justified. The irrelevance of the ministry to the ordinary business of life is the result of institutional lag, whereby the liberal ministry has not explicitly reformulated its function and roles consistent with a transformed liberal faith.

It is not necessary that the liberal ministry should continue to perform its roles in a perfunctory way, coasting along on the coattails of orthodoxy or making only sporadic attempts to redefine and reinvigorate its roles. The validity of ministerial roles inheres in the service of a general or universal function, irrespective of the claims of a particular church doctrine or clergyman. It behoves us to reconsider both our function and our roles in terms of our liberal faith that we may feel justified in the function we serve and may lead the churches to expect the ministry to perform meaningful roles. Singly we cannot do this within the structure of our liberal institutions, but collectively we can make the definition of our function and roles consistently explicit and provide dynamic leadership for a dynamic liberal faith. We have work to do when we know how to do it. Then it may be recognized that the laborer is worthy of his hire. The liberal churches may then offer not only a significant faith, but a ministry able to relate that faith to life in concrete ways.

Liberal Religion and the Psychology of Church Life

FRANCIS TERRY

WE have long been familiar with the notion that we are living in a crisis of incomplete emancipation. Twenty or twenty-five years ago, Professor John Macmurray was saying that we had set intellect free, and kept emotion in chains. He pointed out that the ideals of freedom had won wide conscious acceptance, and had been put into effect in the spheres of speech and discussion and of certain basic legal rights: but in the emotional life, in the subtler texture of personal relationships and unobtrusive social and economic pressures, and in the vast unconscious background of men's minds, authoritarian sentiments and patterns of behaviour had continued to be in control. This had produced an acute state of tension between opposing psychological forces, with sentimental falsification of emotional life, and a general uneasiness and unrest. We have also, since that time, seen rather similar views expressed by psychologists, as for instance, in Dr. Erich Fromm's *The Fear of Freedom*, dealing with the psychological resistances to emancipation.

This is the general point of view from which I discuss the relationship of Liberal Religion to the Psychology of Church Life. It is a subject which obviously invites such treatment. Here is a group of churches which have emerged from a background of authoritarian Christian tradition by a gradual process of emancipation. They describe this process, and the position to which it has brought them, in terms which are predominantly intellectual—freedom from creeds, freedom to search for truth, the practice of candour, reason and toleration; and their propagandist literature has dealt mainly with matters of belief. At the same time they have always insisted that this intellectual emancipation is not the main substance of their religion; religious life, they say, is their bond of union and, in expressing this, they have tended to dwell on what they have in common with the piety of past generations and of the other churches around them, and to say that the religion of the heart is not affected by changes of intellectual belief; they have made much of tradition, and even shown archaistic tendencies in their liturgies and church-architecture. This is a clear *prima facie* case for recognising a conflict of the type to which John Macmurray and Erich Fromm have called attention. Is it not the most likely cause for the sense of malaise, frustration and lack of resolution to which these churches are at present so subject? And is it not also a probable cause of their not gaining the new adherents one would expect—those who are attracted by their avowed ideals being put off by something incongruous in the spirit of their church life?

That, in very rough outline, is my thesis. The position is so complex that even to treat it at book-length would necessitate over-simplification, but I will try to make some introductory suggestions.

We may start at a nodal point—the concept of *authority*. Put barely and unemotionally, the question of authority is always concerned with the distribution of opportunities and responsibility for making decisions. In a given situation, who is the proper person to decide what is to be believed or done? That is the sort of context which is implied in all the meanings of the word. Is this a situation in which I judge for myself and take my own line, or is it one in which I look to someone else for an authoritative ruling? Obviously both sorts of situation have to be recognised. There are situations in which everyone would agree that people must rely on their own impressions and be guided by their own taste and judgment, and the whole idea of an authority is irrelevant. There are other situations in which, it is plainly necessary for government to make laws, for managers to give orders, for experts to be consulted, and for individuals to accept and carry out the rulings of these different types of authority. But there are wide areas of life in which opinions differ as to how far every man should judge for himself and how far matters should be dealt with by methods of authority. It is here that the main issue arises between Liberal Religion and Authoritarian Religion: how far is religion a matter in which each man must judge for himself, and how far one in which men defer to someone or to something which displaces their own judgment? It is the gambit of Socrates: in sailing, we obey the captain, in building, we accept the opinion of an architect, but we cannot fob off our responsibility in judging the central issues of human life. In this statement, I have deliberately stripped the issue of its psychological implications. In fact, the two attitudes are associated with two very different sets of sentiments and recollections and habits of behaviour.

The liberal method of direct acquaintance with a situation, personal assessment of its quality, reacting to it in one's own fashion, giving open expression to one's attitude, and freely comparing it with other people's expression of their experiences and reactions, is the basis of human contact with reality at all levels, and the basis of all understanding and trust between man and man. That is how the small child begins to build up its picture of the world and of its own place in it. It continues to be the method by which life is kept fresh and genuine and capable of growth: without it there would be no sweetness or relish; we should be strangers to one another and to our own hearts. It is essential for all new investigations, original thinking, and deepening of insight, which are the means of human advance. It is like the buds and green twigs of a tree, which manifest its life, and constitute this year's growth, when the growth of past years has hardened into a woody trunk. But, like the green twigs, it cannot be always bearing the whole weight of a complex structure:

and, like the buds, it is tender and requires freedom from pressure, and sometimes protection from adverse forces; juries must be guarded from the pressure of public opinion and journalistic propaganda. We may feel a duty to avoid undue influence on a hesitant person who asks our advice; or we seek a quiet retreat in which to make up our mind on an important personal issue.

Authoritarianism, in which forming one's own attitude is displaced by the attitude prescribed by those who are presumed to know better, has very different associations. They originate, not in the child's dawning discrimination of self and other selves and objects and their discernible qualities, but in his realisation that certain of the pressures to which he is subject are attempts by other selves to influence his conduct in desired directions. To accept the rewards and approbation and security obtainable by being a good child, though wholesome enough at the time, supplies a morbidly submissive pattern for later life. Even in childhood it is normal that there should also be negative reactions, displays of hatred and revolt, and compensatory dreams of an adult life irresponsibly free from constraint, in which also one will, oneself, be in a position to command and punish. These patterns, with accompanying associations with betters and inferiors, stronger and weaker, will be liable to be revived by authoritarian situations in later life. Such situations are unavoidable. Any settled mode of life requires organisation, and divisions of function, and accumulations of traditional experience, with consequent need for often accepting other people's directions and not always acting on one's own direct judgment. In the interest of stability, it is natural to use social pressures to induce conformity with the resultant system. Then, too, there is a natural inclination to speed the rate of advance by letting the ablest men take the lead and set the pace, and use their prestige and influence, and various sorts of pressure, to induce the rest to keep up, though quicker than they can be genuinely persuaded as to the rightness of the course. These leaders tend to form an *élite* or governing class, who take the position of betters and superiors, and dominate the rest, partly for the general benefit, partly as exploiters and ambitious lovers of power. They develop a new sense of values. Free behaviour tends to be displaced from the centre, as a mere private indulgence: instead, the admired qualities are subordination and leadership—on the one hand obedience, doing what is prescribed rather than what one personally feels like doing, and on the other, the responsibility of the man who is conscious of himself as a public figure, not giving free expression to his own tastes and opinions, but charged with the duty of setting an example and pointing the way of right conduct to others. Sensitivity becomes of questionable moral value, and will-power is exalted—the sheer obstinate determination which enables a man to suppress his inclinations and devote all his energies to the uncongenial task prescribed to him, or, in a higher situation, to dominate

the minds of his weaker-willed inferiors. Conduct comes to be thought of not as personal response to situations but in terms of rules and standards. Social pressures are exerted to maintain conformity with these standards and there is little tolerance for the mistakes and imperfections and delays which are incidental to freedom. Instead, there is insistence that rules shall be strictly complied with and orders be fully and punctually carried out: if every waking hour can be filled with prescribed duties, so much the better, since unoccupied leisure might be an opportunity for unauthorised feelings to emerge. Indeed, a fully developed authoritarianism is marked by an attitude of distrust and repression towards all that is free, spontaneous and natural. Authority claims to be the only source of order and harmony and sees in nature nothing but chaos. In the end, by rousing antagonism and throttling men's natural powers of synthesis, excessive authority produces the chaos that it fears.

From this point of view, what is the psychology of the Christian Churches in this country? They originated in the free utterance of prophets and the apostolic church and have never ceased to contain a very great deal of first-hand religious experience, and a fluctuating quantity of liberality of spirit. But, in the common view, they appear as authoritarian institutions, saying to the rest of mankind: "You are incapable of finding your own way, and must submit to our guidance." They are seen as places where lost sheep are gathered in and shepherded, and prevented from straying, and people are kept up to the mark. Their members seem to share in a corporate sense of absolute assurance, and feel themselves in a position to tell the outside world just where it is wrong and how to put itself right. They are also seen as anxious to keep their place as part of an established order, and ready, whenever possible, to invoke social pressures to enforce their influence. It is not necessary to discuss how large a part of the truth that common view contains. For present purposes, two points are relevant. The first is that this common view has sufficient substance to put us under enquiry whether, when we aim at being comparable with the other churches, we may not ourselves, at the back of our minds, have some such notion of the sort of position we should like to be in. Competition has a way of unconsciously assimilating people to their rivals, even sometimes in respect of those characteristics which they are in the habit of stigmatizing as deplorable. Are we sure that our resemblance to the orthodox churches is not accompanied by a lurking desire to share with them their attitude of superiority? And the second point is that this attitude of authoritarian superiority is not inconsistent with the avowed religious principles of orthodox churches. They are based on the belief that the spiritual capacity of mankind has been radically impaired by sin and can only regain the vision of God by submitting to the instruction and discipline of the Christian Church, which God has endowed with unique authority for that

purpose. If, therefore, they fail to respect the independence of judgment of people who are outside the church or wavering in their allegiance, or seek to influence them in the right direction by worldly pressure, this does not involve any denial of their own basic principles. Indeed, it is the liberalism in the orthodox churches which seems inconsistent with avowed principles.

Here Liberal Religion is completely different. We do not believe that any group of men has any just claim to displace or over-rule the religious judgments and spiritual capacities of other men. The only occasions and reasons that we admit for one man's judgment being accepted by another in submissive substitution for his own are such as can be seen to be departmental, worldly, or self-righteous: one man has a professional knowledge of some department of life, and another has not; one set of men has the advantages of leisure, travel and education, while another lot are poor, harassed and ignorant; one man is righteous and serious-minded, while another is a feckless sinner: but none of these is a truly religious ground of authority, or can set one man over another in the presence of God. Either no man has any spiritual capacity, or every man has a spiritual capacity which must be approached with respect. If we despise any man's spirit, we destroy the foundations of our religion. That is what makes our position radically different from that of orthodox churches. That difference has been frequently and finely manifested in the distinctive behaviour of very many of the ministers and laymen in our churches. But it is surely also obvious that our churches have often been influenced by habits and attitudes resembling those of the orthodox churches but inconsistent with the essential spirit of our own principles. It is impossible and unnecessary to strike a balance between the two tendencies. What matters is that we should learn to recognise and detect the inconsistencies, so that we may be on guard against them.

Recognition and detection are made more difficult at the present time by the fact that adverse circumstances are preventing our churches from showing any conspicuous signs of the authoritarian attitude. Our weakness keeps us necessarily humble in our outward bearing. But we shall have to ask whether authoritarian habits of mind are not affecting the inner spirit of our churches, and their capacity for revival, and the sort of hopes with which they envisage revival. When men dream of successful ministries and better days for our churches, what is the imagery in which their dreams are clothed? Do they picture a sanctuary of freedom, with liberality of spirit expressing itself in a community of full candour and mutual respect? Or do they think of a place where people will be magnetised and enthralled, and impressed by a compelling influence, where they will busily keep each other up to mark, and, by their distinction and numbers, exert effective social pressure upon the neighbourhood? And, behind these day-dreams, what are the psychological forces from which they spring? May we not sometimes find an inner

contradiction which stultifies our imagination and prevents us from seeing clearly the road forward?

May I refer to two verbal points, as somewhat symptomatic and symbolic? The first is our tendency to cling to the word "authority," when we have rejected it in its primary sense. Martineau, for instance, in *The Seat of Authority in Religion* might have said simply: "The true basis of religion is to be found not in any authority but in the realities appreciated in our moral and spiritual intuitions." That would have been in harmony with the way in which we speak of the basis of scientific truth and of aesthetic value: we do not drag in the word "authority" any more than we do when talking of our personal loves and loyalties. Yet Martineau said that he could not be content without indicating the "real" authority for religion, though for that purpose he had to torture the meaning of the word, actually going to the point of saying that its full meaning is only seen in cases of self-evidence! The basis of religion had to be *called* "authority," because for Martineau religion remained indissolubly associated with "authoritative" feelings, even after he had seen that there was nothing which was actually entitled to displace men's own judgments. It is symptomatic of an ambivalence which seems to have gone deep in Martineau's nature. And has it not continued to manifest itself in a frequent attempt by Unitarians to find some sense in which the word "authority" can be retained—as though, without it, religion and churches would not be quite what they ought to be?

My second verbal point is a phrase in *Orders of Worship**—not so much the occurrence of the phrase, which has been taken over from Dr. John Hunter, as our reactions, or lack of reactions, to it. In a Litany of Intercession, prayer is offered "For all who seek, day by day, to guide the thoughts and mould the opinions of men"; these are specified as thinkers and writers, teachers and preachers; and intercession is made "that they may be inspired by high ideals, utter only what is true, uphold what is just, and maintain what is right." What of that opening phrase? In the atmosphere of a church service it usually seems quite unobtrusive and even suitable: it doesn't set up the sort of revulsion which is aroused in the minds of some members of Liberal Churches by theological phrases reminiscent of orthodoxy. Indeed, it is theologically quite "liberal," in that it puts preachers on the same level of authority as secular writers, thinkers and teachers. But put the phrase in a different context. Imagine a conference of Liberal educationists, and an allegation that certain teachers are "seeking, day by day, to mould the opinions" of the children in the classroom: they would not be content to desire that the moulding should be conscientious and well-meaning: they would regard the whole idea of "moulding" as deplorable and representing a wrong attitude

* Used regularly in the majority of Unitarian Churches in Great Britain. Published by the Lindsey Press, 2s. 6d.

towards children's minds. Or put the matter in a directly personal context. Imagine a liberal minister of religion, on holiday, listening to another minister's sermon; has he really come to have his opinions " moulded " by what he hears? Jesuits and Communists may desire to have their opinions moulded by the right persons, but surely not Liberals? I do not think that our acceptance of the phrase, when it occurs in a service, is due to mere thoughtlessness: I think it is a real symptom of what I would call " churchiness "—the continuance within a customary environment of the churchly assumption that men are sheep who need to be shepherded, their thoughts guided for them, and their opinions moulded: only when we get into a different context, or apply the notion directly to ourselves, do we become conscious of our deep abhorence of it. May this not be one of the causes of a frequent tendency among subscribers and trustees of Liberal churches to regard these churches as institutions which are more necessary for other people than for themselves?

In order to understand this authoritarian " churchiness " it is worth looking summarily at the historic process by which it has come down to us. The full interest of the story depends very largely upon the interaction of different factors, but, for the sake of analysis, one may consider them separately under three heads—first, authoritarian views of God, Jesus and morality; secondly, ecclesiastical authority, especially that of the minister; thirdly, the operation within churches of authority based upon such secular influences as wealth and culture.

First, then, there is a long-standing tradition in Liberal churches of picturing God as someone who, pre-eminently, requires punctual, ungrudging, unremitting obedience. This picture of God is implied in very much of the moral phraseology of the Bible: and Liberalism tended to elevate the moral element above the rest. It is true that the more terrifying and capricious features of the traditional picture were obliterated: the God of Liberal Christianity did not punish savagely or demand satisfaction for wrath. But Liberalism also discarded successively the other doctrines which tended, for the orthodox believer, to mitigate the exigency of the divine demands—vicarious satisfaction, imputed righteousness, the effectiveness of grace, and the assurance of the elect. God came to be seen purely as a parent, rational and consistent in his demands, and relying mainly upon moral and emotional sanctions, but still an authoritarian parent, who expected obedience to an exorbitant and psychologically most oppressive degree. Liberal attitudes to Jesus tended in the same direction. It is significant that he was often called " the Master " long after he had ceased to be called " the Saviour." Jesus became a teacher of righteousness, who had raised God's moral demands to the level of infinity. In the vernacular instruction of Unitarian homes and Sunday Schools the doctrines of the moral perfection and of the pure humanity of Jesus were actually sometimes combined into the terrible teaching that moral perfection is always

humanly possible, so that, if anyone falls short, it is for sheer culpable lack of will. Forgiveness was, of course, always available, but a rationally moralistic forgiveness, conditional upon reformation. And this moral authoritarian view of God and Jesus was reinforced by the current view of ethics, which saw moral conduct as consisting in the victory of duty over inclination, and duty as a matter of obedience to rule or principle.

Thus religion was felt to involve a demand for perfect obedience, a strenuous and unceasing effort of will, by which personal views and inclinations are suppressed, and all the energies of body, mind and heart directed solely to the unremitting discharge of one's appointed duties. Such is what we find in many of the prayers which have come down to us in print. On the other hand, the religious liberal acknowledges no external authority entitled to prescribe and define his duties. Ultimately, he can only consult the feelings of his heart. But these are just what his sense of obedience tells him must be controlled by his will. The resulting very painful psychological conflict produces a variety of effects, occurring, separately or blended, in different people: the conflict may be avoided by leaving the church, or by ceasing to take its religion with full seriousness; there is usually a good deal of protective self-deception; there may be frustration and diffidence, or exaggeratedly persistent and somewhat aggressive activity; or the tension may be discharged onto other people by constantly exhorting, fault-finding and egging them on. Most of this has the effect of maintaining an authoritarian climate in the congregation.

In earlier days the focus of authority in the congregation was the minister. This may seem scarcely relevant to-day, in view of the depressed situation of most modern ministers, but it is, I believe, a matter of key significance. The position and duties of a minister were originally shaped and defined at a time when the ministry was regarded as an office of authority within an authoritarian church—as it still is, in some other denominations—and the matter has not yet been radically reconsidered in the light of the abandonment of the authoritarian view of religion. The result is that the minister is constantly being placed in a false position, and this falsity tends to affect the whole of church life.

Think of the basic characteristics which the ministry of a liberal church usually shares with that of the Church of England and most other denominations. The minister is a man distinctively set apart from his co-religionists. He normally became a minister as a young man, after a special training, following immediately upon the end of his ordinary education, so that he has little experience of being a layman. Consequently, he is usually what might be called an "imported" minister, brought to the congregation as such, and not a "home-bred" elder, whose spiritual powers had slowly emerged in the same congregation in which they are exercised. Normally, too, though he may have a bishop or synod over him and

assistants under him, he has *sole* day-to-day responsibility for the spiritual guidance of the people committed to his charge and does not share this responsibility with a group of colleagues. Those characteristics are very suitable in their original context, as part of the means by which, through the parochial system, the scattered members of the Christian flock were kept in united obedience to supreme ecclesiastical authority. They would probably never have arisen in a system which had been consistently liberal from the first. For us they can only be makeshifts, and, if we have not yet found it convenient to discard them, we must still be prepared to experience frequent inconveniences from wearing such misfitting garments.

Almost exactly a hundred years ago, actually in 1857, James Martineau considered these questions in an essay on Professional Religion—in which, incidentally, he reviewed *Barchester Towers* and *Scenes of Clerical Life**. He was, at that time, engaged solely in teaching, with no preaching or pastoral responsibilities, and able to look at the matter with unusual freshness and detachment. His conclusion was in effect that there is no longer any place for a professional ministry of religion outside the conduct of Sunday worship. " Grown men and women in these days do not sincerely want to be as sheep to a shepherd; and the attempt to work out such a relation incurs all the penalities and miseries of pretence." He also rejected the idea that the minister's position can be based upon an authority derived from his personal moral qualities " How can you erect it into a distinct business, to carry about the essence of your character? What would your character be worth, if you really thought it fitly set apart for this sort of currency? " Instead, he thought that ministers should be occupied on weekdays in lecturing on secular and cultural subjects. The problem remains the same to-day. The personal contacts with his congregation, which form an essential part of the minister's vocation, are frequently described as " pastoral work," and involved in the fog of unreal and outworn associations which the word carries with it. No man truly regards the minister as his own shepherd, but he still thinks it proper to assume that he is shepherding some unspecified flock of inferior souls who need it, and may half-jocularly pretend to be one of them. Under cover of this unreality, there may be a tacit expectation that the minister's business between Sundays should be much like that of a local political agent between elections, organising rallies and fund-raising events, and courting popularity for himself and his church. But such activities are difficult to reconcile with the most essential characteristics of a true servant of liberal religion—that he should never seek to " manage " men, never have " an axe to grind," but meet people always on the highest level of sincerity and respect, as spiritual beings and free agents, who most never be wheedled away from the central dignity and responsibility of their nature.

Not only personal relationships, but the whole structure of our

* By Anthony Trollope and George Elliott respectively.

traditional church life is affected by the authoritative position once held by the minister. Our tradition still bears the marks of being derived much more from the type of dissent founded on the rights of ministers than from the dissent founded in the rights of congregations; and is still influenced by the fact that ministers, exercising their rights of free speech in the pulpit, were the principal agents in bringing our older congregations over to liberal theological views. The general effect has been that relations between ministers and lay church-officers tend to take the form not of brotherly collaboration between colleagues but of division of spheres of authority between rival jealous powers. The services, which are the minister's sphere of authority, have been kept closely in his hands, and sharply distinguished from the meetings presided over by laymen. In spite of our theoretical beliefs, ministers and laymen, sacred and secular, have been separated in our tradition to a degree unusual in nonconformist practice. We have had little in the way of monthly church-meetings, prayer-meetings, testimony-meetings, class-meetings, and other occasions on which laymen exercise priestly functions in the church; and the lay-preacher is treated rather as a temporary substitute for a minister than as a layman exercising one of the normal functions of church-membership. We have had few lay-theologians; I cannot call to mind a Unitarian A. S. Peake, Bernard Lord Manning or C. S. Lewis; and laymen sometimes apologise for trespassing on theology, as though it were a monopoly of a ministerial trade-union. The old authority has left a legacy of estrangement.

The pulpit is the focal point of the authoritarian associations of the minister. Pulpits were originally designed and put in their dominating position in order that they might be used for authoritative utterance, and laymen are still inclined to expect it, although also apt to resent it when too pointedly directed to themselves. Thus, when a minister speaks out loud and strong, he awakens recollections of Mount Sinai in a smoke, while, if he speaks temperately, he runs the risk of being regarded as an extinct volcano, and ignored. This makes it very difficult for a preacher to speak with any sense of urgency in matters that closely affect the congregation themselves, for they listen to him as though he were claiming a right to dictate to them on these matters, and, on this assumption, quite properly object to his intrusion. Thus no minister will make his congregation more liberal by standing up and telling them what they ought to do about the sort of things I have been discussing, but only by being truly liberal himself, by resisting all plausible temptations to take an authoritative line, and treating his hearers with an even excessive and undeserved measure of patience and respect.

This sketch of the ministry would be quite misleading if one did not at once turn to the topic with which it is so closely connected, that of secular authoritative influences in the church. A minister always depends upon some form of human support, and tends to function ambiguously as the representative at once of God and of

his human patrons. Do the villagers touch their caps to the rector because he is God's representative or because he's the squire's? J. H. Newman, in his first Tract, suggested to the Anglican clergy, that since their authority as the representatives of land-owners had diminished, they should make more of that which they derived from the Apostles. By a converse process, liberalising ministers, as they ceased to be exponents of an authoritative creed and infallible revelation, were driven back on secular sources for whatever authority they still claimed, thereby to that extent secularising the spirit of their churches. They tended to become the spokesmen of the intellectual, cultural, and moral standards current among the particular groups or classes of men, from which their supporters were drawn.

One of the beneficial effects of authoritarian uniformity is to level out the differences among those who are subject to it. The Catholic Church is controlled neither by the professional, nor by the working classes, neither by townsmen, nor by countrymen, but by the ecclesiastics: and so, too, in its measure, Biblical Fundamentalism provides a specialised "religious" atmosphere which is equally remote from all secular levels of culture, and therefore provides a sort of neutral ground. When, on the other hand, men start expressing their religion freely and naturally, their secular differences of education and occupation and social class become manifest, and are liable to cause difficulties, unless their liberalism is marked by a peculiar depth of religious charity, insight and humility. One of the possible results is that the Church shrinks into a caste or clique, containing people from only one social class, and saying complacently "Our values are the right one's; what nice people we are." That is the great danger we run when we define our bond of union as consisting in "like-mindedness." But beyond this is the possibility that, in a class-based church, the traditional atmosphere of authority may become transmuted into a claim for spiritual domination by one social class over others.

That was the principal form which authoritarianism assumed in Liberal Churches in the latter part of the nineteenth century; and we are still very much affected by the habits which it engendered and the reactions which it provoked. "Modern Civilisation" (which was taken for the practical result of the Christian tradition) seemed then to be enthroned in triumph and entitled to lead and direct the progress of the world: and, at home, it was obvious that the intelligent and enterprising members of the middle class were more representative of modern civilisation than the effete aristocracy or the ignorant lower orders. Accordingly, in all churches, Christianity was liable to be confused with a secular religion in which Modern Civilisation was God and the intelligent members of the middle classes were his prophets; and the tendency was naturally strongest in those churches which were already under intelligent middle-class control, and where there were no dogmatic or ecclesiastical checks upon the deification

of Civilisation. Churches became, too largely, places maintained by the well-to-do in order to raise the poor nearer to their own moral and religious level—and, though this was in violent contradiction of the fundamental assumptions of the New Testament, it was frequently clothed in a great deal of specifically Christian phraseology. The well-to-do people went to church to fulfil the responsibilities of their position by exerting a good influence and example upon less fortunate people, and taking counsel as to what leadership they should give in respect of the great problems of the nation and the world; poor people went there to learn better ways and become more like their superiors. The authoritarian psychology of this phase of development is specially evident in the preoccupation with leadership. In what directions should the Churches lead mankind? Where should they place the weight of their influence? Even theological discussions became mixed with considerations of the tactics of leadership, instead of concentrating upon the plain question "What, in our own hearts, do we at this moment really believe?" Of course Christianity and Liberalism did not become extinct among us. But Christian phraseology was misused and misinterpreted and left us a terribly debased currency, and mere individual sincerity and mutual respect were made to seem petty and private compared with the grand Responsibility of Leadership. Have we not noticed on our vestry walls how often in their portraits, the leading personalities of those days have a noble Olympian air, which is quite absent from the faces of Priestley and Lindsey.

I have now completed my survey. I have tried to bring into focus some of the things in the background of church life which seem to me to need attention. Indeed, I regard these problems as the most vital of those confronting us at the present time. I have offered no solutions, though I hope I have hinted at the spirit in which I think the problems should be approached. Our need, as I see it, is to re-sanctify and re-consecrate our church life by building deeply and solidly upon our actual religious belief. The most relevant part of our belief is that which sees the presence of God as a centre of freedom in the personality of every man, and looks upon the church as a temple built by faith upon that foundation, a congregation of " saints," not because it is different from other men, but because its bond of union is the latent sanctity of all men. In this faith we should go forward, patiently and gently, but also sincerely and open-mindedly, ready to question everything, and prepared for changes as great, and perhaps as painful, as those which transformed Judaism from a Temple-Religion into a Synagogue-Religion.

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Democracy and Religious Liberalism

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PUTTING the sanction of religion behind democracy has become big business in the U.S.A. All clergymen, I suppose, are on the mailing list of the Religion and American Life Committee, an organization made of selected laymen and selected big business. Recently I was favored by receipt of the Annual Address by Admiral Ben Moreel, now a spokesman for the steel industry. He takes it for granted that the democratic idea is founded on good solid Christian orthodoxy and he feels very strongly that the health of religion and consequently the health of democracy depends upon retaining, or reinstating, the supernatural. He believes this because "a secular order (is always) based on the idea of the pattern laid down by God for man's conduct in society." And, again, he proves his sophistication by saying that "every social order derives its sanctions from the prevailing conception of the cosmic order." This interests me as a brilliant inversion of Shailer Mathews profound insight that "theology is transcendentalized politics." Admiral Moreel would have it backward, that politics always derives from transcendentalized theology.[1]

Another group specializing in Admirals is the Foundation for Religious Action in the Social and Civil Order. Recently its national conference was told by Admiral Radford that national security depends upon religious faith. The main trouble with the American people, according to the Admiral, is that they lack a sense of complete righteousness. "We must rebuild the conviction that our path is the closest to that which God would have us follow . . ."[2]

There is, on all sides, a campaign going on to draft God for our side. By some sort of sympathetic magic it is hoped that putting God on our currency and on our stamps, and by inserting Him into our Constitution and pledge of allegiance, we shall be given a supernatural guarantee of security. The dangers of this process I need not reiterate for readers of this journal. Any attempt to make patriotism and religious conformity synonymous is not only a most debasing form of vulgarity but a threat to individual freedom of conscience and religion. In Duluth last summer, for example, the local American Legion posts sponsored a huge billboard with this edifying formula for Victory: "Combat Atheistic Communism. Have faith in God and attend Church regularly." And much as

* Personal note, p. 20.

[1] Ben Moreel: *Religion in American Life: A Layman's Appraisal*, 1955. Pamphlet.

[2] *New York Times*, October 26, 1955, 16: 4.

one may admire American pragmatism, this version of "Say your prayers and smash the Commies" is still another sickening effort to use religion for selfish political ends.

The extravagances of the current campaign to preempt God and Christianity for the democratic cause should be fair warning for us. Let us make doubly sure of our motives and our evidence when we engage in preempting democracy for religious liberalism.

At this point I suppose I should observe the academic convention of definitions. I have neither the time nor the patience for this gambit, as I have never seen a satisfactory and comprehensive definition of democracy nor do I expect to. Democracy, after all, is something alive and in process, and in order to pin it to our drawing boards it would have to be dead. Descriptions can be given of certain so-called democracies of the past, but a definition of democracy in the present moment would be as elusive as a definition of human nature itself. It has been said that our Constitution is whatever the Supreme Court says it is; it is just as true to say than that democracy is whatever the Court says it is, and the Court is ever in the process of spinning its definitions. Does democracy mean separate and equal facilities for Negroes? For about seventy-five years the Court said it did and our democracy followed that pattern. And now the Court has reversed itself and democracy is assuming a new definition in the area of race relations. Again, for lack of adequate definition some of the simplest issues of governing have yet to be settled for the democratic mind. For example, should Congressmen vote on issues as they see them and according to their conception of the public interest or should they carefully ascertain the opinion of their constituents and vote accordingly, regardless of their own personal opinions? The democratic faith, accordingly, is a somewhat slippery and vaporous subject. Despite the best efforts of citizenship and social science teachers, it is evident that the American people are quite inarticulate on the subject, if not completely ignorant of its major premises. Repeated surveys of the thinking of the average citizen reveal depressing results. Studies also demonstrate that the vast majority of American soldiers in World War II had not the slightest notion why they were fighting.

The confusion in the public mind is caused by the abstractness of most definitions and most talk about democracy. There is a failure to bring the subject down to earth in terms of the discussion of actual practice and cases. What Professor Chafee says about the First Amendment holds for most elements of democratic theory: "The First Amendment had no hold on men's minds because it was not associated with live facts or concrete images. (It was) like an empty box with beautiful words on it. . . ." And like empty boxes, democratic principles crumple and collapse when relatively little pressure is put upon them.[3]

[3] Z. Chafee, Jr., *Freedom of Speech and Press*, 1955. Pamphlet of Freedom Agenda.

For the purposes of this paper I shall content myself with listing certain elements I should consider essential to the democratic tradition, though considered as ideals rather than practices. Valid elements within the democratic faith available for verifying liberal religion are:—

1. Optimism, belief in progress, and this-worldliness.
2. Belief in pluralism, unity in diversity, the value of living together with differences.
3. Faith in the capacity of ordinary people to govern themselves and make wise decisions about their problems when the facts are available.
4. Conviction that independent, non-conformist thinking is valuable and must be protected. (The First Amendment).
5. The equality of persons in a legal sense; the idea that merit determines status; suspicion of all forms of privilege, hierarchies, castes.
6. Universal brotherhood, unrestricted by barriers of creed, color, or race.
7. The use of persuasion, facts, and logic in securing action, rather than the preferred use of force, threats, arbitrariness.
8. Regular elections at prescribed intervals in which the people, without coercion of any kind, freely choose their officials.

Directly or indirectly, I hope to comment on these propositions.

H. J. Muller writes in his *The Uses of the Past* that the weaker the Papacy became in reality the more extravagant grew its claims. Our current concern with saving the world for democracy yet a third time might be considered in the light of this statement. If the American people had not been so terribly nearsighted at the time they were involved in these wars they might have noticed that there was precious little democracy in the world at the time. And the irony is that the more wars we fight for democracy the weaker it becomes.

Those who worship democracy might attain a little humility from the perspective of the past. It is a most depressing thought that, in 8,000 years of recorded human history, democracy has won few popularity contests. It was tried in ancient Greece, but in very limited fashion; it sputtered briefly and soon disappeared from view. Millennia passed and then France, England, and the United States, started experimenting with the idea in the late eighteenth century. But actually, not until the nineteenth century—just yesterday—did it make much headway. We have to admit that democracy is an alien idea in our world. The vast majority of mankind throughout human history simply has not cared much for our favorite institution. Nor is it a matter of a slow starter warming up and then beating out the field. On the contrary, democracy has suffered an enormous decline in recent years and definitely appears to be on the defensive. What do these facts do to our optimistic doctrine of human nature?

Should Christianity get the credit for the development of the democratic idea? Is it compatible with and sympathetic to our pet institution? Many learned volumes have argued in the affirmative. Arnold Toynbee, for example, would persuade us that the democratic values of our civilization all derive from their Christian content and that it cannot long survive unless replenished by that faith.[4]

And yet, looking at the major emphasis and thrust of Christian ideology, what is the record revealed by history? Until the Reformation, Christianity was synonymous with Catholicism. Can anyone find a hint or a spark of sympathy for democracy in this monolithic, monarchical structure? The slightest flicker of democracy during its long regime and the iron heel of Rome and its Inquisition came down upon it. But there is no need to labor this point, in view of such widely known documentations as those of Paul Blanshard and Harold Rafton.

In its more objective and honest moments the Catholic Church makes no claim to democratic affinities—or to political affinities of any kind. Leo XIII says very honestly that it is not the church's province to have preferences. "She does not disapprove of any, provided the respect due to religion and the observance of good morals is upheld." One is tempted to ask what would be considered bad morals in a political order, since the Church showed no antipathy to Hitler, Mussolini, or Peron. Only discrimination against the Church and efforts to take over the educational system finally drew its enmity. But to continue with the classic statement of Leo XIII. "It is not to be supposed that democracy is the only possible form of government for an enlightened people or that there is any special sanctity inherent in it."[5]

And yet, despite the historical record and such statements as this, Catholic spokesmen still try to clamber aboard the democratic bandwagon. It is commonly said in Catholic journals and schools that Catholic thought was mainly responsible for the American Declaration of Independence. It was the influence of Cardinal Bellarmine, so it is said, that was definitive in shaping the ideology of the great document. This notion always seemed so utterly fantastic, but I had never bothered to examine the Catholic evidence for this claim until recently, when I determined to trace it down. What I discovered is so profound a lesson in logic and historical reasoning that I must share it with you. Catholic writers adduce just two bits of evidence—and they are undisputed—to prove their contention. And from these two basic facts they weave their web of Catholic love for democracy. The two facts are: (1) in the great library of Princeton University during the eighteenth century there was a copy of Bellarmine's works. And it so happens that James Madison was a graduate of Princeton. (2) In the large personal library of Thomas Jefferson there was found to be a copy of a detailed

[4] Quoted by John Foster Dulles, in *Faith of Our Fathers*, 1953 Sermon.

[5] *Catholic Encylopedic Dictionary*, p. 149.

refutation of Bellarmine, a work pointing out the fallacies and weaknesses of the Cardinal's political reasoning. It is assumed that Jefferson had read this work. And so from these two facts: that Madison graduated from a University whose library contained a book by Bellarmine, and secondly that Jefferson may have read a refutation pointing out what a poor thinker Bellarmine was, comes the popular Catholic belief that the Declaration of Independence is virtually a Catholic document. Still, in all fairness, one must concede that the reasoning here is at least as cogent and convincing as are the arguments for the Assumption of the Virgin Mary!

The major Protestant branch of Christianity coming from the Reformation is Lutheranism. Popular belief has it that the Reformation was fought for religious liberty and freedom of conscience. It might therefore be assumed that Lutheranism began as an early democratic movement or that it at least paved the way for democracy. Such a conclusion would be rash indeed. It is true that in his rebel days Luther did make noises like a liberal, saying that no one had the right to coerce the religious conscience of another. But once the hunted heretic had vaulted into the saddle of power he immediately changed his tune. The words of Zechariah Chafee, directed to another issue, are just as illuminating in summing up the tragedy of Luther: " Many of those who denounce tyranny while they are its victims do not really want to end it, but to direct it."[6] So far was Luther from respecting individual freedom of conscience that he believed in the death penalty for dissenters: " Heretics are not to be disputed with, but to be condemned unheard, and whilst they perish by fire, the faithful ought to pursue the evil to its source, and bathe their hands in blood. . . ." Luther displayed his true colours when he sided with the despots of the day, the German Princes, against the oppressed common people, the peasants. On that occasion he said that feudal serfdom was entirely consistent with Christianity and must be accepted obediently and humbly. Any rebel against the condition to which God had called him ought to be struck down like a mad dog.

Luther's favorite text, and it would be difficult to find one more anti-democratic or evil in its social effect, was from St. Paul. " The powers that be are ordained by God." Hence the great virtue in humanity is obedience: obedience to clergy and the Bible in religion; to State and the Princes in all else. For the people are too stupid and sinful to have anything to say about their government; and besides all this they deserve a harsh and brutal hand from their rulers, who after all are only exercising the judgment of God. Religion, therefore, has nothing whatever to do with politics, economics, social justice, or citizenship. Let me quote Luther directly on this crucial issue: " The world is far too wicked to be worthy of good and pious Lords. It must have princes who go to war, levy taxes, and shed blood, and it must have spiritual tyrants who impoverish and burden it with

[6] Chafee, op. cit., p. 31.

bulls and letters and laws. This and other chastisements are rather what it has deserved, and to resist them is nothing else than to resist God's chastisement. As humbly as I conduct myself when God sends me a sickness, so humbly should I conduct myself toward the evil government which the same God also sends me."[7]

Without understanding this fundamental emphasis of Lutheranism one can hardly understand Germany. Luther's teachings, it would seem, conditioned the German people for centuries to be the dupes of any tyrant who came along and could attain power. Bismarck, the Kaiser, Hitler—all found subjects awaiting their commands. A clear case can be made out, I believe, that Lutheranism prepared the way for the ultimate degeneracy of Nazism. The student of history must therefore take a dim view of the future of Germany. So long as that unfortunate country is dominated by a religion set unswervingly in the direction of autocracy, both in the family and in political life, how will it be possible for democratic habits and democratic ways of thought to become established?

Between the largest Christian Church, the Roman Catholic, and the principal Reformation branch, the Lutheran, probably 60-70% of all Christianity is accounted for. And both, as we have shown, are definitely opposed to the democratic way of life as we know it. The full sordid and depressing story of the relation between Christianity and democracy has recently been documented by Professor James Hastings Hicols. As a project of the special study commission set up by the National Council of Churches, he wrote *Democracy and the Churches*. In no uncertain terms he lists as staunch opponents of democracy the Roman Catholics, the Continental Lutherans, and the high church Anglicans. His only pats on the back he would give to the non-conformists, whom he lists as Congregationalists, Baptists, Methodists, Unitarians, and Quakers. Concerning the current claims of the Catholic Church as the defender of democracy against atheistic Communism he writes these blunt words: "In the midst of the present Roman Catholic crusade against Communism, the fact that politically speaking, this is a family row, should not be obscured. Communists can come to an understanding with Roman Catholics far more readily than they can with Puritan Protestantism. . . . Natural affinity may one day unite these two most deadly enemies of man's freedom."

This is not the whole story, however. Calvinism, the other great branch of the Reformation, proved to be not so hard and unyielding but that change was possible. Only when harsh authoritarianism began to decay and break down do we find the crude beginnings of the democratic spirit and religious liberalism. Prof. Perry Miller, the Harvard specialist in Puritan history, dates the transition to democracy as beginning with the Great Awakening of 1740-48. Though most of us, I dare say, write this period off as

[7] H. T. Kerr, Jr., *A Compend of Luther's Theology*, 1943, p. 223.

another lamentable Billy Graham episode of revivalist history, Professor Miller does not. Instead he defines it as a great crisis of our history which determined whether the common people were to come into their religious rights and in so doing forward the way to democracy itself.

Prior to the Great Awakening the Puritans had no use for democracy. To quote Professor Miller: "The Puritans were not rugged individualists . . .; they abhorred freedom of conscience; and they did not believe at all in democracy."[8] They believed that though rulers might come into office as the choice of the people, once in they had no concern with the intentions or wishes of the electorate, for they were not responsible to it but to God. As John Winthrop has it in a classic statement of 1645, "The authority is concerned with liberty that men enjoy but it is a liberty to do that only which is good, just, and honest." And who defines the good, the just, and the honest? The authority of course.

The greatness of Jonathan Edwards, says Professor Miller, is in his appreciation that a leader could no longer stand before the people giving impregnable postulates of the eternally good, just and honest. The leader should get down among them and bring them into actual participation in these values. His ultimate criterion always was the actual welfare of the people—not some transcendental values outside. Edwards thus was attacking natural law, the favorite bulwark of aristocratic government. For natural law is an especially effective method of circumscribing the freedom of people, so that it is confined to the self-evident, *a priori*, abstract, eternal and divine rules. It is most curious that Walter Lippmann in his latest contribution to political philosophy deals with the identical problem faced by Edwards; and in this comparison it is Edwards who is the modernist and libertarian, Lippmann who is the reactionary pleading for the reinstatement of natural law. Lippmann, like Winthrop, argues that the people are not to be trusted; indeed, they must not play a large or immediate part in the direction of their own affairs. Government, on the contrary, is not to be subservient to mass opinion but is to be guided by eternal precepts of the ultimately true, in short, the public philosophy. The effect of Lippmann's thought, if put into practice, would be a retreat from freedom. His formulation simply cannot be reconciled with the democratic faith—a belief in the greatest possible individual freedom and a trust that by liberating the individual human spirit it will find its own way to enlightenment.[9]

The next social stirring which further eroded Calvinism was the American Revolution. The main elements of Calvinism—a fearful, omnipotent God of vengeance, the sinfulness and hopeless-

[8] Perry Miller, "The Puritans and Democracy," in *The World of History*, edited by Canby and Gross, 1954.

[9] Archibald MacLeish, *Lippmann's Public Philosophy*, Yale Review, Summer, 1955.

ness of man, and consequently the futility of hoping for progress—all these dreary elements conflicted sharply with the revolutionary spirit of the time. For the Revolution was based on glowing, optimistic hopes in the hearts of men, and it was fought to free men from tyranny in the expectation of setting up the ideal community, a great new republic founded on virtue and devoted to the regeneration of the human race.[10] It is obvious that revolutionary fathers had to be believers in human nature, believers in the future progress of mankind.

It is, therefore, exactly a coincidence that so many of the founding fathers were followers of rationalism, deism, and Unitarianism. Trinitarians were few and far between. At this point, it might be appropriate to cite one of our favorite proof texts, that of Charles Beard, in his *Rise of American Civilization:* " When the crisis came, Jefferson, Paine, John Adams, Washington, Franklin, Madison, and many lesser lights were to be reckoned among either the Unitarians or the Deists. It was not Cotton Mather's God to whom the authors of the Declaration of Independence appealed; it was to ' Nature's God.' From whatever source derived, the effect of both Unitarianism and Deism was to hasten the retirement of historic theology from its empire over the intellect of American leaders and to clear the atmosphere for secular interests."

We must accept the fact that this liberalism of the Revolutionary period did not sweep the whole American people as Jefferson predicted it would. Unfortunately, supernaturalism and orthodoxy have continued as very strong component factors, causing an ambivalence of attitudes and a certain confusion about the meanings and implications of democracy. Our present confused condition is well described by John Dewey: " After democratic political institutions were nominally established, beliefs and ways of looking at life and of acting that originated when men and women were externally controlled and subjected to arbitrary power, persisted in the family, the church, business, and the school, and experience shows that as long as they persist there, political democracy is not secure."

In this Revolutionary episode we have, it seems to me, a very persuasive example of the intimate connection between religion and political thought. And if theology is " transcendentalized politics," as Shailer Mathews contends, we are fortunate indeed if we can go to our political tradition and not be embarrassed. In our case this democratic political tradition may even give us hints as to the desirable evolution of our religious thought. Tom Paine in his *Age of Reason,* written some 150 years ago, anticipates this line of thought. He wrote that people who worship a cruel and tyrannical God will be cruel and tyrannical themselves. Any serious-minded reformer, accordingly, would do well to try to secure reforms in

[10] Carl Becker: *The United States of America: An Experiment in Democracy*, 1920.

religion and reforms in the way people think of God. It is obvious, for example, that where religious totalitarianism prevails one finds a totalitarian political order. One may validate this easily by studying the religious traditions of the peoples who gave rise to Hitler, Mussolini, Franco, Salazar and Peron, or by examining the old religious tradition in Russia before Communists came to power.

Let us here indulge in a little theological speculation. The democratic idea had trouble in starting just so long as everyone thought of God as an oriental monarch living somewhere in the sky. Where people are conditioned to obeisance to an other-worldly despot, they are easily led to accept and to obey worldly despots as well. So long as one accepts authoritarianism in religion one will look for absolute authority in the political order as well. Those who believe in heavenly dictators in religion will think it natural to accept an earthly dictator in this world.

The concept of revelation also has political implications. So long as a religion teaches that one class is especially favored by God and that it alone understands His wishes through revelation, there can be no place for the democratic doctrine of equality. The equality doctrine in our democratic tradition therefore validates our liberal notion of revelation. When we hold that all men at all times have equal access to God and that there have been no privileged revelator classes, we are being consistent with democratic doctrine. As Emerson said, all men are equally bards of the Holy Ghost. Our current theological naturalism may be seen as entirely in accord. Taking God down out of the sky and putting Him into the hearts of men gives added weight to any theory of equality. If we see God as a creative power within all life, and if we teach that divinity is present in each person, then the democratic process becomes mandatory. Acting in accordance with this precept would mean a strict respect for that spark of divinity present in all humanity. Hence there could be no justification for dictatorial conduct or dictatorial thinking, for any such procedure would violate the integrity of the individual.

Our serious interest in, and approval of, group dynamics sees its justification in this democratic faith in equality; our faith in the potential ability of every person to make a contribution to the solution of common problems. Without this solid conviction democracy could not be considered a live option. So central do I think this to be in our *credo* that I shall introduce here the only extended quotation in this paper. Its importance comes from its being the measured word of America's leading 20th-century philosopher of democracy, John Dewey:

> " The keynote of democracy as a way of life may be expressed, it seems to me, as the necessity for participation of every mature being in the formation of the values that regulate the living of men together; which is necessary from the standpoint of both the general social welfare and the full development of human

beings as individuals. . . . The positive meaning of this statement is that all those who are affected by social institutions must have a share in producing and managing them. . . . The individuals of the submerged mass may not be very wise. But there is one thing they are wiser about than anyone else can be, and that is where the shoe pinches, the troubles they suffer from.

"The foundation of democracy is faith in the capacities of human nature; faith in human intelligence and in the power of pooled and co-operative experience. . . . Each person is entitled to equal opportunity of development of his own capacities, be they large or small in range.

"While what we call intelligence may be distributed in unequal amounts, it is the democratic faith that it is sufficiently general so that each individual has something to contribute, and the value of each contribution can be assessed only as it enters into the final pooled intelligence constituted by the contributions of all. . . .

"The basic freedom is that of freedom of mind and of whatever degree of freedom of action and experience is necessary to produce freedom of intelligence. . . . The modes of freedom guaranteed in the Bill of Rights are all of this nature. They are guaranteed because without them individuals are not free to develop and society is deprived of what they might contribute."[11]

The bearing of this statement upon the use of group dynamics seems obvious. In similar vein one might commend the use of non-directive counselling in our pastoral work. The close correlation between the philosophy and practice of the latter to our liberal religion is deserving of a paper in itself. This technique, refined mainly by Carl Rogers of the University of Chicago, is based upon our own valuation of personality: a fundamental respect for the integrity and individuality of the person, together with an underlying belief that the individual has the capacity and strength to achieve growth and maturity. In non-directive therapy this is held to be achieved solely through constructive growth forces within the individual. The Counsellor merely reflects back selected emotionalized attitudes in a way to bring about insight and understanding on the part of the client. The aim is always to help the individual to look squarely at himself, gain an understanding of himself, and learn to accept himself, thus gaining self-respect and self-confidence.[12]

Before leaving this topic we would commend the work of Ashley Montagu to anyone seeking verification for our doctrine. In *Statement on Race*, for example, occur such delightful sentences as: "Human altruistic drives are as firmly based on an animal ancestry as is man himself. . . . Our tendencies to goodness, such as

[11] John Dewey, "Democracy and Educational Administration." Address before N.E.A., Feb. 22, 1937. School and Society, April 3, 1937.

[12] Virginia Axline, "How Counselling is Done in the Counselling Center at the University of Chicago." Mimeographed paper, no date.

they are, are as innate as are our tendencies toward intelligence. . . . This realization that the ethical conception of love, which almost all peoples have arrived at independently, is no mere artificial creation of man, but is firmly grounded in the biological structure of man as a functioning organism, is a discovery of the greatest possible significance for the future of mankind."

The great deterioration of the position of the minister over the past hundred years might be argued to be a democratic advance. Far from lording it over his parishioners, he now has the opposite problem; that of maintaining his self-respect on a par with his people, especially where salaries are concerned. Long ago, of course, we gave up the idea of being qualitatively different from our lay members, and our ordination services mark us only as dedicated and specialized laymen. It may be that this dilution of prestige accounts for the current search to discover exactly what our function is and where our basis of authority is located. But, really, will we ever be able to bypass the democratic principle of the equality of all persons? Or do we want to? Like anyone else we must achieve recognition by merit alone, whether we are looked up to or not. Any charismatic quality we may possess must derive from what is within us and not from something external—not even a D.D. degree! Fundamentally this comes from whatever learning, wisdom, or expertness we have acquired through training and study. Democratic teaching on equality, in sharp opposition to castes, classes and privileges, can assure us of nothing more. Just as there can be no place in a democracy for Popes, Bishops, or Lords, there can be no justification for ministerial privileges or special deference.

It may be said, however, that freedom of the pulpit, the freedom of the minister to speak his mind freely, is a privilege these days not enjoyed by many laymen. And the attraction of the liberal pulpit for many people may lie in just this fact that the minister says openly what the congregation dares not. If this be so, then the minister is holding the fortress against that day when his freedom will again be shared by all. Still, any minister who thinks he has perfect security is foolhardy. Though presumably guaranteed freedom of the pulpit, there can be no guarantee against attacks or efforts to retaliate by undermining him in other areas.

It is therefore very important for us to know the democratic tradition and to be able to draw upon its arsenal of ammunition when we need it. Milton, Thomas Jefferson, John Stewart Mill, and Justice Holmes set forth the democratic faith in great and overwhelming eloquence. It may be presumptuous to introduce such well-known quotations here, yet this must be put on the record. How else can one display the democratic tradition?

As our first text against the repression of unpopular ideas, we shall cite Milton's *Areopagitica:*

> " And though all the winds of doctrine were let loose to play upon the earth, so Truth be in the field, we do injuriously by

licensing and prohibiting to misdoubt her strength. Let her and Falsehood grapple; who ever knew Truth put to the worse, in a free and open encounter. Her confuting is the best and surest suppressing."

Continuing chronologically, the greatest American champion of free speech, Thomas Jefferson, paraphrases Milton in his Preamble to the Virginia Act for Establishing Religious Freedom. Here, surely, is American doctrine in full strength:

". . . truth is great and will prevail if left to herself; that she is the proper and sufficient antagonist to error, and has nothing to fear from the conflict, unless by human interposition disarmed of her natural weapons, free argument and debate, errors ceasing to be dangerous when it is permitted freely to contradict them."

But how many Americans, deep down in their hearts, really believe these democratic abstractions in their full implications? For example, the following quotation from Jefferson's First Inaugural is the perfect answer to McCarthyite hysteria in our day, yet how much of the general public could be persuaded to accept this good democratic doctrine?

"If there be any among us who wish to dissolve this union, or to change its republican form, let them stand undisturbed, as monuments of the safety with which error of opinion may be tolerated where reason is left free to combat it."

And finally, from the famous Holmes dissent in the Abrams case:

". . . the ultimate good desired is better reached by free trade in ideas—that the best test of truth is the power of the thought to get itself accepted in the competition of the market, and that truth is the only ground upon which their wishes safely can be carried out. That, at any rate, is the theory of our Constitution. . . . It is an experiment, as all life is an experiment. Every year, if not every day, we have to wager our salvation upon some prophecy based upon imperfect knowledge."

Our Constitution, as Holmes says, guarantees freedom of belief and freedom of speech, just as do our religious societies. And diversity of conviction inevitably follows, with our churches containing every shade of the theological and political spectrum. Our problem, as always, continues to be to clothe abstractions with flesh; and in our own lives to try to be models of tolerance and respect for opposing opinions. If we do not succeed it is hardly likely our congregations will be influenced when we speak of the necessity of mutual respect and living amicably together with all our differences. We can point of course to the democratic tradition in politics: that Republicans do not walk out on government when a Democratic administration is in power. And so, too, Unitarians do not walk out on their church when they happen to disagree with the opinions of their minister. Yes, the teaching of tolerance and the need for appreciation of diversity is still our number one problem and we need every source of verification we can lay our hands on.